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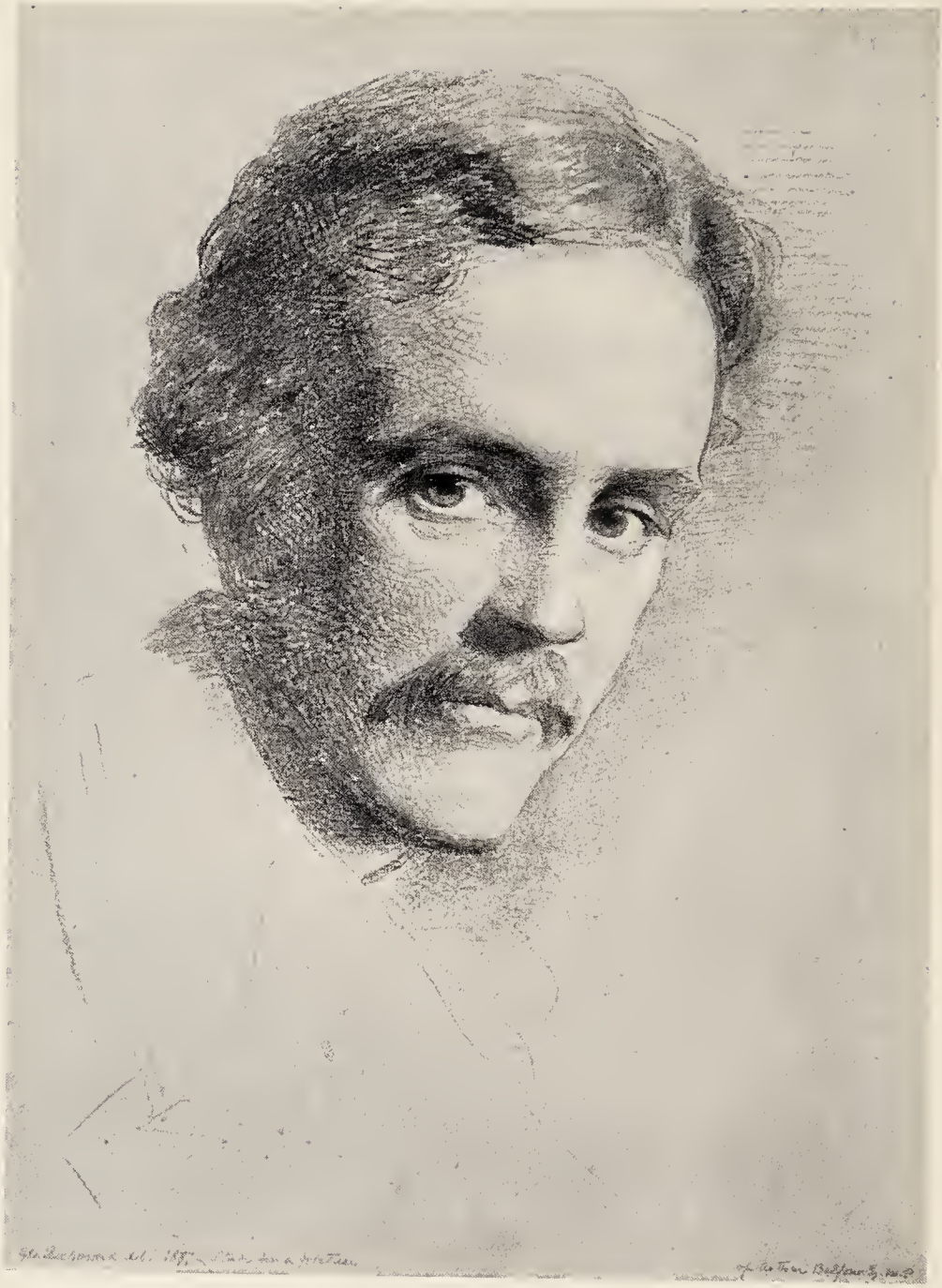

ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR
From a study by George Richmond, 1877

RETROSPECT

An Unfinished Autobiography

1848–1886

BY

ARTHUR JAMES
FIRST EARL OF BALFOUR

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

WHEN Lord Balfour began to write his Autobiography in January, 1928, two years before his death, he was within a few months of his eightieth birthday. But the extraordinary vigour of his power for work, and for enjoyment of the multitude of interests life held for him, had shown little sign of diminution.

Only a few weeks later, however, he suffered from the first serious symptoms of the illness from which he never completely recovered. From that time onwards his physical strength declined, and he was gradually forced to give up many of his public duties, as well as all the pleasures of social life, and the outdoor exercise in which he had delighted. In May, 1929, together with his colleagues in Mr. Baldwin's Cabinet, he tendered his resignation of Office to the King. For the remaining months before his death, in March, 1930, he was obliged to lead an invalid's life.

Throughout these years of weakening health and serious illness, the writing of the Memoir now published became his increasing interest. The beginning had been made more at the persuasion of his family than at his own desire. His opinion of his powers of recalling incidents and describing scenes was, as the reader of the following pages will see, unduly low, and for some years before 1928 he made this an excuse for refusing to embark upon an account of his life.

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'The gaps of memory would be so disgraceful,' he said to me in 1925. 'In fact' — laughing — 'I know far more about the history of my country than I do about my own.'

The truth, perhaps, was that, until the long full-tide of his activity began to ebb a little, the inclination to turn from the present to the past could not be induced. His instinct may have been right, and his Autobiography begun only when its time was ripe. Nevertheless, the fragment that we have must increase regret that the beginning was not made earlier.

The chapter headings were put on paper within five minutes of his first consenting to write a Memoir at all. This was on January 16, 1928. He pulled from his pocket the pen that had signed the Versailles Treaty (the gift of Mr. Lloyd George for that occasion, and Lord Balfour's constant companion ever after), put a blotting-pad on his knee, and began. Characteristically, the instant his decision was made, he turned his mind seriously to carrying it out.

'You see the word "Episodes,"' he said. 'By that I mean the events of my public career — Ireland and so on. I shall want to be reminded about those. About what comes before nobody knows anything but myself. Then as for my philosophy — of course, I shan't describe it in a book like this. But if the thing is to be a portrait of me at all, it will have to go in. It has been continuously in my mind — I've worked at it off and on — well! — since I was at Eton. No! really *before* Eton I believe I began mud-

dling about with those ideas. You know — when I look back at myself, I'm appalled by how little I have changed in eighty years. If I am to write about myself, I shall have to show people what I am — a very lazy man who has always had a job on hand. That's what I have been always. I'm not erudite, but I've got a smattering of a lot of things. Let me look at those chapter headings again ——'

This bit of conversation is taken from a note made of it that day. It was the first of many that followed after he set to work on the Memoir, about what he would say, and the way he would say it. Much of this reappears in literary shape in the book; much, unfortunately, does not, for in talk he would range over many periods and many experiences, but in the actual writing he found he could only develop his scheme of composition in chronological order. The chapters that follow, therefore, with the exception of the last two, carry his history no farther than the year 1886, when he stood only on the threshold of Cabinet Office. They were all written before May, 1929. At that date he had just begun to consider the material for the chapter on his Irish Secretaryship, when a severe attack of illness interrupted the work for many months.

When he resumed it, in the winter of 1929–30, he was less able for the continuous effort of preliminary reading and consideration. The two final chapters have been included only after some hesitation. They are hardly more than notes from his dictation. Never-

theless, the interest of the subjects seems to warrant the inclusion of these rough drafts.

Chapters I to XIV he revised himself to some extent. Like all his books, they were written in the first place in his own hand, then typed, corrected, typed again. This process he was apt to repeat until the wording more or less satisfied his fastidious standards. No part of this book had reached that high degree of finish. It is now, however, given to the public in the form in which it stood when the final failure of the writer's strength brought his work to an end.

Notes, when not otherwise described, are his own.

Lord Balfour's intention had been to dedicate this book to the children of his brothers Gerald and Eustace, and of his sister, the Dowager Lady Rayleigh, and to their descendants, his great-nephews and great-nieces.

BLANCHE E. C. DUGDALE

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RETROSPECT

An Unfinished Autobiography

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CHAPTER I

CHILDHOOD

THOUGH I was born as far back as the year 1848, my memory supplies nothing resembling a continuous picture of my life before the latter part of 1856. In that year I remember witnessing, from what is now the card-room of the Turf Club, the display of fireworks celebrating the conclusion of the Crimean War; and from then onwards I can recall, despite a most indifferent memory, the general tenor of my life. But this cannot be said of earlier days. They are surprisingly barren of remembered incident. I know as a matter of historic fact that my father [1] died in February, 1856, but I cannot recall the event. His illness, which lasted for two years, made it impossible for him, during that period, to play any part in his children's life; and I cannot in the least recollect his personality. Since he had to winter in Madeira (1855–56) my mother, who was nursing him, arranged for their elder children to join them. I must, therefore, have crossed the Bay of Biscay four times: twice, it seems, by steamer, twice by sailing ship — the last

[1] James Maitland Balfour of Whittingehame. (*Editor's note.*)

voyage lasting, I understand, seventeen days.[1] Of these adventures (for so they must have seemed to me) I can recall nothing whatever. Even sea-sickness left no embittered recollections.

No doubt these months at Madeira left behind them some dim but ineffaceable memories. Visions of transparent seas; of a precipitous coast-line and strange vegetation, providing a setting in which I would gladly insert some interesting anecdotes of my early years. But, search as I may, I can recall no occupation more fruitful than that of messing about among the many small ponds which plentifully watered our garden; and no incident but one, which I would willingly have forgotten. My 'Uncle Charlie' Balfour,[2] who was one of our party in the winter of 1855–56, took us children out for a sail in the roadstead. A squall struck the boat; it heeled over, and blue water began pouring into the well. I do not know whether we were in any serious peril, and I do not remember what the other children did. For myself, I lost no time in climbing onto the seat, where I incontinently burst into tears, weeping copiously till the situation was restored. So far as I remember, little or nothing was *said* by my elders about this inglorious exhibition, but I was left in no doubt as to what was *thought;* and the impression left was indelible. I can only hope that the single incident in my Madeira experiences which I have been able to

[1] My sister Nora's Journal.

[2] Mr. Balfour of Newton Don.

retrieve from oblivion will not be regarded as representative of the forgotten residue.

Detached episodes of this sort, even were more of them available, would in any case constitute no very illuminating introduction to the reminiscences with which I propose to deal. Something more comprehensive seems to be required, and before going further I will endeavour very briefly to provide it.

When I look back over my long life, it seems never to have been wholly dissociated from two houses, and from the successive generations by which they have been inhabited. The first of these is Whittingehame in East Lothian, where I was born, where I hope to be buried, which has been my home through life, and for many years the home of many of those [1] to whom I have dedicated these reminiscences. It was there that my mother dwelt from the date of her marriage. It was there that she brought up her eight children, all of whom came into the world between 1845 and 1854. It was there that through sixteen years of failing health she devoted herself with the most enlightened energy to their welfare, and the welfare of all connected with the estate. Our debt to her is incalculable; and it is largely through the working of her spirit that the close-knit continuity of our family life remained unbroken by her death, and has so remained to the time of her great-grandchildren.

A like feeling of continuity clings to my long mem-

[1] See Preface, page viii. (*Editor's note.*)

ories of Hatfield. When my mother married at eighteen, Hatfield ceased to be her home, and shortly after, my grandfather Salisbury [1] married again.[2] Thus it happened that his children by his second marriage were the contemporaries of his grandchildren by the first; and intimacy between the young people who were of the same age, though of different generations, became the most natural thing in the world. It was greatly encouraged by 'My Lady'—as Mary, Lady Salisbury, was commonly called in the family circle. In 1869 my grandfather died; and my Uncle Robert, who succeeded him, and my Aunt 'Georgie,' Lady Salisbury,[3] to say nothing of their children, had already shown me a measure of affectionate kindness which no mere change of external circumstance was likely to modify. To them I shall refer later in the proper place. For the moment I am only concerned to indicate the personal background (symbolized by Whittingehame and Hatfield) which has given its special quality of continuity to my eighty years of life. It is true, of course, that the most important incidents of my career have probably occurred elsewhere, for example, at Eton, Cambridge, Westminster, Whitehall, Dublin, Paris, and Washington. But none of these were more than the theatre of interesting episodes. The 'personal background,' as I have called it, was elsewhere.

[1] James, second Marquess of Salisbury. (*Editor's note.*)

[2] Lady Mary Sackville West.

[3] Miss Alderson, daughter of Sir Edward Alderson, Baron of the Exchequer. (*Editor's note.*)

ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR AT THE AGE OF NINE

CHAPTER II

PRIVATE SCHOOL

THOUGH my memory carries me vaguely back to the latter part of 1856, I have nothing of the least autobiographical interest to say about the following years, till I went to a private school at the age of ten. I had tutors in the interval, most of whom I liked. Unfortunately the only one of whom I have any clear recollection is the only one I really disliked. He impressed his image on my memory — though not on my affections — by pulling my ears during the Latin lesson, and explaining how much cleverer his late pupils, the Percies, were than the Balfours, from whose unteachable stupidity it was his hard fate to be then suffering. Perhaps he was right. So far as my personal share in the Balfour shortcomings was concerned, I put in no defence.

The transfer of educational responsibility from private tutors to a private school, though accompanied by all the pains of family separation, was otherwise an unmixed blessing. The school, at Hoddesdon in Hertfordshire, was a small one; and its head master, the Reverend C. G. Chittenden,[1] was an excellent teacher — clear, interesting, and kindly. He was something of a musician; an ardent admirer

[1] He was son-in-law of a former Rector of Hatfield, and brother-in-law of my mother's devoted friend and helper, Miss Emily Faithfull.

of Tennyson. This, in the year eighteen hundred and sixty, was quite as it should be. His favourite philosopher was Archbishop Whateley, who had nothing in him of the mystic, and not much, I fancy, of the ecclesiastic. He took an intelligent interest in science, and, greatest merit of all from my point of view, he was very ready to answer questions about things in general, asked by an inquisitive and, doubtless rather tiresome, pupil. My debt to him is great; greater certainly than any I owe to other teachers of my boyhood.

I could hardly have found opportunities for making full use of his conversation but for the fact that my health was so delicate that the ordinary school routine had often to be seriously relaxed in my favour. In what, from a medical point of view, my 'delicacy' exactly consisted, I have not the least idea. But I was very easily tired, and work in the classroom had sometimes to be reduced to the narrowest limits; much of my time was spent in the open air, and not a little of it in walks with Mr. Chittenden. It was during these walks that tastes outside the ordinary school curriculum were insensibly developed. Whether, if such energy as I possessed had been concentrated in orthodox scholastic channels, I should, on my transference to Eton, have succeeded in taking Remove, is a matter of very doubtful conjecture. In hard fact, I took Upper Fourth.

CHAPTER III

ETON

I WENT to Eton in September, 1861, when I was just thirteen, and stayed there till I went to Cambridge soon after I was eighteen — important years in every boy's life, but not always very easy to describe. In my case, the difficulty arises mainly from the fact that at Eton I did nothing worth describing. I was neither very good nor very bad; I distinguished myself neither in pupil room nor in the playing-fields; I was not a hero among my fellows, nor the subject of hopeful speculation among my teachers. I had, indeed, no difficulty in maintaining an average position among my contemporaries. But I had no great desire to do more; and whether looked at from the scholastic or the athletic point of view, I was quite uninteresting.

These negative characteristics were, no doubt, due in some small measure to the physical causes which hampered me at Hoddesdon. Under doctor's orders I was excused early school; I was not sufficiently robust to excel at football, too short-sighted to enjoy cricket; and in those far-off days a boy, though he might be short-sighted, was not expected to wear spectacles, any more than, if cold, he was expected to wear a great-coat. Nor did he.

I cannot, however, flatter myself that the mediocrity of my scholastic career was due to physical disabilities. The fact is, that I had no gift for languages, no liking for grammar, and never acquired sufficient mastery of the classics to enjoy them as literature. I detested the weekly task of writing bad Latin prose; I detested even more the weekly task of composing yet worse Latin verses. My absence from early school, when most of the 'saying lessons' were taken, saved me much discomfort. Whether it deprived me of valuable training I know not. But I find it hard to believe that any kind of education would have given me a good verbal memory.

All this may seem like a criticism of the school disguised under a portrait of the scholar; but it is not so. The system that prevailed in the early sixties of the last century was doubtless capable of improvement, and it has been improved. But then, as now, the communal life of Eton was in itself an education; then, as now, the book knowledge which it supplied sufficed for those who were ready to learn; and if there be any survivor of those distant years who attributes the ignorance of his old age to the deficiencies of his early training, he probably flatters himself, and does less than justice to his teachers. I, at least, cherish no such illusions; and it is to Eton that every boy would go whose educational destiny was in my keeping.

It is not really inconsistent with this to admit that the most valuable things I learned during my years

at Eton were not the things I was taught, and that in all probability a somewhat similar confession would be made by many of Eton's most faithful children. How, indeed, could it be otherwise? To begin with, the system of large classes, inevitable in a large school, compels educational standardization, and limits the amount of special attention which can be paid to individual idiosyncrasies. No single method can be applied with equal advantage to all the raw material which has to be dealt with; and the method actually employed probably showed at its worst when applied to a boy who, like myself, was by nature neither industrious nor persevering, who had no scholastic ambitions, who, though interested in many subjects and open to many kinds of intellectual appeal, could never find the least attraction in the beaten path by which so many in every generation have reached the highest levels of classical accomplishment. For this it would be absurd to blame the system, the more so as I doubt whether any teaching, however sympathetic, would have turned me into a finished scholar.

But if Eton, through my own deficiencies, failed to supply intellectual inspiration, it did not fail to supply opportunities; and this, from my point of view, was perhaps even more important. We were not overworked. The school routine was in no sense excessive; and if a boy had tastes which led him beyond the prescribed curriculum, he could indulge them without discredit — if he would.

Now, I was fortunate in being born with the germs

of many tastes; I was still more fortunate in the wise way in which they were encouraged by my mother. The home influences were thus unusually propitious. I read, idly no doubt, but (for a boy) I read a good deal. There was no question here of lessons. No question of finishing a book because I had begun it; or of mastering the tedious parts of a subject because there were other parts which had entertained me. This easy-going procedure, no doubt, had its demoralizing side. But this was somewhat mitigated by my mother's influence. She loved good literature; she taught us to love it; and because she never dogmatized, her guidance was irresistible.

It is, of course, impossible to catalogue the benefits she thus conferred on those of her children who were old enough to profit by them. But she performed one specific educational service in a manner so characteristic that it deserves to be noted. She taught us to read French and enjoy it. In those days the languages and literatures of the modern world were handed over for purposes of education to girls and governesses; while boys and schoolmasters willingly contented themselves with Greek and Latin. There may have been many good reasons for this division of learning between the sexes, but the reasons usually assigned were that, so far as girls were concerned, it was socially more useful to know how people talk today than how they wrote some two thousand years ago; while as for boys, it was impossible to teach modern languages effectively at a public school, since

a class taught by an Englishman would never learn the proper pronunciation, and if taught by foreigners would refuse to learn anything at all. Whether this dilemma was as formidable as it seems, I cannot say. But in my case, at least, its results were unfortunate. Through no fault of my teachers, I failed to master either Greek or Latin; through no fault of my own, no other languages were ever taught me. French, German, Italian, and Spanish were ignored. English was supposed to come by nature — which in my case (as I am assured by quite competent critics) it has failed to do.

However this may be, the situation was one which my mother could not face with equanimity. She was herself a good French scholar and an ardent lover of French literature. Her daughters were being taught by governesses. What was to happen to her sons? The expedient of interpolating between Eton and Cambridge an interval to be spent with an English crammer or in a French *pension*, was, so far as I know, never contemplated. In any case, it would have come rather late. The obvious plan of having lessons in the holidays would have spoiled the holidays. The third alternative was to make a beginning without lessons, and this she accomplished with (I fear) much labour to herself, but great delight to her children. Her scheme was to take the most exciting French novel she could find, and then, by the aid of translation, excisions, and explanations, to make her youthful audience grasp the general trend of the narrative,

and ultimately, without much difficulty, to follow its details. She chose 'Monte Cristo' for her first experiment; and though the knowledge of French brought to our gathering by my brothers and myself must have been negligible, such were the merits of the book and such the skill of its interpreter, that we listened spell-bound to the story, and almost forgot that we were being introduced to a new language.

So far as I was concerned, however, the most important single incident of these boyish years was of a much more trivial kind. One day my mother presented me with the posthumous volumes of Lord Macaulay's miscellaneous writings then recently published. Who is there, in these days, who would admit that at any period of his life his intellectual development had been profoundly stimulated by the writings of Lord Macaulay? To be sure no one denies their brilliancy. But, says the critic, brilliancy is but a surface quality, and the antithetical glitter of their style cannot conceal an essential shallowness of insight, a congenital incapacity for philosophic speculation, which must always keep their author in the second rank of nineteenth-century writers. On this point I dare offer no opinion, if only because I am not an impartial judge. My personal feelings are too deeply concerned. For no sooner was I acquainted with these specimens of his writings, than I became his fascinated admirer. His style delighted me. I thought his dialectics irresistible. His gifts of narrative carried me away; the things he wrote about

invariably interested me; in short, he supplied much of the mental nourishment I desired, in the exact form that best suited my very youthful appetite.

I think my mother was a little startled by this sudden outburst of idolatry. She was far too wise to belittle the idol; but she suggested other writers (for example, De Quincey, and, a little later, Sainte-Beuve) who might with advantage find a place in my pantheon of essayists. I profited by her advice, but Macaulay was not easily dethroned.

Nor, so far as I can judge, did any ill consequences follow. It was the 'Essays,' not the 'History,' that I read, and with the greatest avidity; and the 'Essays,' studied with this devotion, were no bad introduction to a fairly wide range of history, literary and political, and, more particularly, the history of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Macaulay, read in this spirit, taught much but suggested more. His enthusiasms were catching. The authors praised by the Master must at least be worth looking at by the disciple. To say that in these years I made a serious study of English literature would be absurd. But I did read with intense enjoyment some of the best things in it. If I was unworthy of 'Samson Agonistes,' or of the 'Heaven' of 'Paradise Lost,' all 'Hell' and much of the 'Garden of Eden' (to say nothing of 'Lycidas' and the early poems) gave me great delight; if the praises lavished on Dryden's 'Hind and the Panther' seemed extravagant, 'Absalom and Achitophel' in one style, and, in another, the two

odes on 'Saint Cecilia's Day' were greatly to my taste; if I was unable to see that the prose of Addison was very much better than the prose of Steele, I could at least glean a gentle pleasure from the most characteristic productions of both — and so on through many generations of crowded literary history. There was here, of course, neither learning nor scholarship; but there was much easy-going enjoyment — enjoyment which incidentally introduced me to writings in very different styles and to writers of very varying merits.

In like manner I got to have some knowledge of their contemporaries — the politicians and men of action. This was sometimes of the lightest, based perhaps on a single anecdote or passing allusion. But even a bowing acquaintance may be better than nothing, and all these trifles made some contribution to the picture of the age which I was instinctively trying to draw. If it be objected that knowledge so superficial must needs be useless, I will content myself with noting that it is the kind of knowledge which men eagerly seek about their own contemporaries; and in the matter of gossip I see no reason for drawing invidious distinctions between the present and the past.

A friend to whom I showed these paragraphs about Macaulay reproached me with ignoring his 'History,' and dwelling only on his 'Essays.' But his 'History,' magnificent torso though it be, could never have done for me, or I think any other boy of like mind, what was done by the slighter works. From the nature of

the case, essays are limited in their scope. They may throw a brilliant light, but it illumines a narrow field. Their centres of interest must differ even when they are written by the same author and deal with the same period. An article on Clive cannot treat the Seven Years' War from the same point of view as an article on Chatham. Bunyan and Dryden, though contemporaries, cannot with advantage be run in double harness. But although collected essays are for these reasons usually wanting in unity, they are not on that account likely to be less attractive to youthful readers who are both idle and eager. What the boy of historic tastes delights in are vivid glimpses of the long procession of statesmen, authors, and fighting men who constitute the pageant of the past. He knows well enough that they are merely glimpses, totally lacking in historic continuity. But this does not disturb him. A sense of continuity is not fostered by the endeavour to force into a single ordered narrative all the facts known about the past. No such narrative could ever be written, nor if written would it ever be read. The boy who cares for history may be trusted to spin his own tissue of connecting threads if he be given time, and an adequate provision of material.

Though it may be true that Macaulay was not a great critic, though it be even less disputable that he was not a profound thinker, nevertheless he was, from my point of view, something much more important.

He was a showman of supreme genius. The services which this great gift enabled him to render to me, as to countless others of my generation, were inestimable, and I have always remembered them with gratitude. No doubt their range was limited. It could not be otherwise. They were a most stimulating introduction to history and literature. But history and literature were not everything, nor were they in my case the only regions of knowledge into which I made frequent if irregular incursions. I cannot remember how or why I first became interested in natural science, though the conversation of Mr. Chittenden during the walks he took me at Hoddesdon must have been a leading cause. My mother encouraged every nascent taste, and a taste for science among others. But I do not think she knew much science herself, or ever attempted to teach it to her children. Had my brother Frank been three years my senior instead of being three years my junior, the inspiration might have come from him, for he was born to be a great biologist. My Uncle Salisbury (then Lord Robert Cecil) was always interested in chemistry and physics, but as a boy I saw comparatively little of him, and I do not remember his ever talking on these subjects. The question of origins, however, is not important; but it is otherwise (from an autobiographical point of view) with the question of development. Neither I nor any one else could foresee, when I was playing about with elementary textbooks and Leyden jars, that I was fostering activities predestined to occupy, directly

or indirectly, no insignificant part of my working life. To readers, well aware that in matters scientific I have never been more than an interested amateur, such a statement may seem surprising, indeed extravagant. Yet I think it is true, though it certainly requires explanation.

Let it, then, be remembered that in the sixties of the last century, the decade which included my time at Eton and Cambridge, the so-called 'conflict between religion and science' was in a very acute stage. On the side of Biblical criticism the writings, for example, of David Strauss and Renan had begun to ferment in the minds of many educated people. On the scientific side such works as Lyell's 'Geology' and Darwin's 'Origin of Species' (his 'Descent of Man' was not published till 1871) had raised cosmological issues which profoundly stirred the religious world, and raised quarrels which apparently are not yet wholly appeased. The times (from the point of view of religious speculation) were stormy, and every dabbler in theology or science was profoundly conscious of the fact. Among these dabblers was I.

Now, my mother was a woman of profound religious convictions, and it was in an atmosphere saturated with these convictions that our home life was spent. But how fortunate were we! Controversial questions between the churches, which she deemed to be of secondary importance, were quietly ignored. We were all of us christened and confirmed in the Church of England; we all of us, when at home, took

part, as a matter of course, in the services of our Presbyterian parish church. I am to this day a communicant in both churches.

Nor did this ever lead to any embarrassing situations. Never, so far as our experience went, were the differences between these two branches of the Universal Church ever mentioned in the pulpits of either, nor were they ever discussed at home. But a 'conflict between religion and science' was of a very different order of importance. It was not an inheritance from 'old, unhappy, far-off' quarrels within the Church. It *was*, and in essence *is*, a conflict between a religious view of the Universe and a naturalistic view — the naturalistic view claiming to be the only one in full harmony with the uncorrupted teaching of experimental science.

In this situation my mother showed, so far as I was concerned, the most admirable judgment. She saw that the difficulties to which I have adverted were of a kind which each man must deal with for himself, and in his own way. She was never tempted to discourage scientific study; she never treated it as dangerous to the higher life; she never took refuge in bad science when good science appeared to raise awkward problems. On the other hand, she never surrendered her own convictions as to the inestimable value of her central religious beliefs. This point of view, if I rightly represent it, may have lacked theoretic finish; but it appealed to me in 1866, and after more than sixty years' reflection, it appeals to me still.

Considered from my personal point of view, the situation I have endeavoured to describe was of great importance. Had it never arisen, I should have gone to Cambridge furnished with 'small Latin and less Greek'; with enough mathematics to deprive 'Little Go' of its terrors; with a good deal of miscellaneous history, defaced no doubt by lamentable gaps, but fairly held together by its chronological framework; with a varied assortment of literary favourites, some French, but mostly English; with a few leading principles of chemistry and physics, and with a general conception of evolution as it was presented in Lyell's 'Geology' and Darwin's 'Origin of Species.' But now there was added to them a new subject which profoundly modified the spirit in which I looked forward to the years of university life which lay immediately before me. It was no longer a question of passing the examinations necessary to get a degree, nor even of diminishing, with the help of accepted authorities, my ignorance of subjects which happened to interest me. Here were problems of the first importance on which there were *no* accepted authorities. They were, of course, engaging the attention of many men of learning and ability. But these enquirers were not agreed about their methods; they were not agreed about their conclusions; they were not agreed even about the principles on which their investigations should be conducted. Thus was opened before me a field of speculation which offered the most exciting possibilities, and it was little wonder that I was eager

to exchange the routine of even the best of schools for the intellectual variety I looked for at the University.

But school routine had its revenges. It was all very well to get into the habit of doing no more school work than was necessary to avoid trouble, but the practice had many disadvantages, even at the moment when it seemed to make life easy. How, for example, was I under this system to 'place' myself among my fellows? In my own opinion my true intellectual position was by no means suggested by the school lists. But was my more favourable estimate shared by more impartial observers? Let it not be thought that I nourished any sense of grievance. I never supposed that my school work was worse thought of than it deserved. But, however low I might choose to rate scholastic successes, scholastic failures, wholly unrelieved by any flashes of appreciation, began, as boyhood drew to its close, somewhat to discourage me, and tended to make me doubtful of myself.

Whatever was morbid in all this was dissipated by two incidents which, trifling as they seemed, had important psychological effects. The first of these occurred in connection with an examination held at the end of each half, and called, for reasons unknown to me, by the curious name of 'Collections.' I was in 'Upper Fifth,' and under a master very famous in his day, and still remembered by old Etonians under the name of 'Billy' Johnson (afterwards William Cory). He was a poet, a scholar, an historian, and withal a

man of very marked and somewhat quaint individuality. To him it occurred to set a paper in 'Collections' relating to matters outside our ordinary school curriculum. Whether we were required to write an essay, or to answer miscellaneous questions, I do not remember. I think the former. However this may be, I suddenly found myself proclaimed second among all the competitors in order of merit — 'Billy' Johnson indicating that, if the poor quality of my other papers had not rendered such an honour impossible, I should certainly have been first.

I was greatly surprised and much encouraged. Though the occasion was quite unimportant, it was the first examination (and I may add the last also) in which I ever earned any sort of distinction; and the distinction, however slight its value, was the only fruit of my unauthorized activities which ever received recognition. I was naturally grateful; and years afterwards I must have told Lord Esher how sorry I was not to have found some fitting opportunity of reminding William Cory of the incident. He seems to have mentioned this to Cory, for in the interesting and valuable volume of Cory's letters and conversations which he published in 1923, he reports him [1] as having asked (in 1874), 'What made you name Arthur Balfour as one who would like to see me? I should have thought he was too far promoted [2]

[1] *Ionicus*, p. 71 (named after Cory's volume of poems entitled *Ionica*).

[2] The only 'promotion' I received in 1874 was becoming an M.P.

to look back at all on an old teacher; but he was a good listener once.'

I knew nothing of this observation till some fifty years after it was made, when the man who made it had for a generation been in his grave. I should have greatly liked to remind him of my unforgotten debt to him in old Eton days, though he would hardly have remembered it.

The second incident of which I wish to speak might seem at first sight even more trivial than the first, though so far as I was concerned it was not less valuable. In itself it was nothing more than a chance conversation with my Uncle Robert (at that date Lord Cranborne) which sprang from nothing in particular, which led to nothing in particular, of which I remember no details. In what, then, lay its magic? Not solely in the fact that he said interesting things in a very interesting way, though this was part of the charm; but in the fact that he spoke as a man speaks to a man, and not as a man speaks to a boy. He permitted no flavour of patronage, no tactful manipulation of the subject-matter to mar the impression of conversational equality. If he asked a question, it was not in the spirit of an examiner. If he gave information, it was not in the spirit of a teacher. He assumed reciprocal comprehension; he looked for an intelligent response; and the result was a conversation whose effects on one of the speakers lasted long after its themes were forgotten by both.

But 'good talk,' the reader may be inclined to say,

is, after all, no very rare event; why, then, should this particular example of it have produced any noteworthy consequences? Why in particular should it, like 'Billy' Johnson's examination, have done anything to mitigate the diffidence whose character and origin I have tried to describe?

It was, in truth, a kind of initiation, a first introduction, to what was best and rarest in the grown-up world. Kindly sympathy from my elders, friendly chaff and gossip among my contemporaries — with all these I was familiar, for all these I was grateful. But the incident I have described was something new in kind. It marked a fresh departure. My uncle, then about thirty-six years old, was already a brilliant debater, a distinguished writer in 'The Quarterly' and 'Saturday Review,' predestined in a few months to become a Cabinet Minister. That he should have thought it worth while to converse with me as he did, opened out prospects full of interesting possibilities, and encouraged me if I could, to explore them.

Evidently my first theatre of operations must be the University. My conceptions of Cambridge were, indeed, rather vague. But I certainly thought of it as a place where a lover of games, a lover of social intercourse, and a lover of thoughts new and interesting, might satisfy his heart's desire. I was never disappointed. The station fly which first conveyed me to Trinity took the road, as I remember, which passed the Fitzwilliam Museum. It is a fine building, though in a style by no means characteristic of university

architecture. But for some odd reason I felt that it was the symbolic gateway into a new life; I was greatly moved, and I never pass it now without recalling something of that inexplicable thrill.

CHAPTER IV

CAMBRIDGE

AT THE beginning of the October term in 1866, Lord Sackville Cecil[1] and I arrived together at Cambridge, and donned for the first time the blue-and-silver gowns worn by Fellow Commoners of Trinity College. And what (the reader may be inclined to ask) is, or was, a Fellow Commoner, and why should he have been decked out in blue and silver?

He was a survival (now abolished) of less 'democratic' days. He shared some of the privileges of the Fellows of the College. Like them he had a right to rooms within its precincts, and like them he dined in Hall at the 'High' Table. He therefore had a somewhat better dinner, and sat when he ate it, on a chair instead of a bench. For the rest, he got the same educational opportunities as any other undergraduate; but he or his parents paid more for them. I never knew exactly why my guardians decided that this was the academic status most suitable for me. One reason may have been that my father was a Fellow Commoner before me; another that my grandfather desired that Sackville and I should go up together. He had never been to a public school; and perhaps it was thought that, as a Fellow Commoner, he would

[1] He was my half-uncle and exact contemporary.

more easily find a congenial set than if he were a friendless unit in the general body of undergraduates. My mother can have had no personal experience of Cambridge, and I know not who advised her. She certainly had no natural liking for 'privilege,' or the appearance of privilege; least of all in a form which verged so closely on the ludicrous.

Some years later, the whole system was brought to an end, and none were found to mourn its destruction. But the curious thing is that while, so far as I know, its ill effects were negligible, to me personally it was of incalculable advantage. Indeed, it is not too much to say that no small part of my total debt to Cambridge may be directly traced to this strange relic of a bygone age. At Christ Church, Oxford, a very similar system then prevailed. But the 'Commoners' (as I think they were called) did not dine in Hall at the High Table, but at a table of their own — as did the Scholars with us. And certainly any one who in those days had paid surprise visits to our Great Hall at dinner-time might on occasion have been tempted to think that in substance the two systems were the same. Often he would have seen the upper end of the High Table wholly occupied by Masters of Arts in their black gowns, while undergraduates in blue-and-silver sat massed together below them. In such an event he might naturally have supposed that the arrangement was a deliberate contrivance to maintain sound academic distinctions. But he would have been quite mistaken. Diners at

the High Table sat down in the order of their arrival; if, therefore, the Fellow Commoners sat below the Masters of Arts, it was because they came later; and if they came later, it was because they preferred each other's company to that of their elders and betters.

Now I was very far from underrating the social charms of my contemporaries. But I liked variety, and naturally there was much of interest to be got out of my seniors which no contemporary could possibly give me. I took care, therefore, not to be too often among the latest arrivals.

The results, so far as I was concerned, were most fortunate. I made lifelong friends among people whom otherwise I might barely have known. Two of them — Henry Sidgwick and John Strutt (afterwards third Lord Rayleigh) — became my brothers-in-law. The first of these, who was ten years older than I was, had been Senior Classic [1] and a Wrangler. He was in due time to be appointed Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University, to write very notable books on ethics, politics, and political economy, to be a leader in the movement for the higher education of women, and to be one of the founders of the British Academy. The second, who was six years older than I was, had been Senior Wrangler in 1865, and had just obtained his Fellowship. As my brother Frank was a born biologist, so was my brother-in-law Rayleigh a born physicist. In future years he was to be one of the four world-famous men of science

[1] A term now abolished.

(the others being Clerk Maxwell, J. J. Thomson, and Ernest Rutherford) who have been professors at the Cavendish Laboratory since its beginning. He did an immense amount of original research in connection with light and sound. He discovered argon; he inspired (from the scientific side) the movement which created the National Physical Laboratory; he became President of the British Association, President of the Royal Society, Chancellor of the University of Cambridge; and he lived to do valuable scientific work for the Government during the Great War.

My intimate friendship with these two young men, who afterwards, in their respective lines, became so eminent, and the close family relationship to which that friendship led, was rendered possible solely by the trivial fact that, as a Fellow Commoner, I dined with the 'Dons' instead of with the general body of my contemporaries. I was the youngest of the three, and when I first knew them, the eldest was only twenty-eight. Considering how different we were in temperament, in aptitudes, in our main occupations, in many tastes, and in some opinions, even the family intimacies due to intermarriage hardly explain the close sympathy between us which nothing but death could terminate. As I was the youngest, it is not strange that I should be the survivor; but it *is* a curious accident that I (considering how widely separated were our careers) should myself in 1928 be deeply concerned in furthering the interests of two schemes of public importance, one of which was

largely due to the initiation of John Rayleigh, the other to the initiation of Henry Sidgwick. I refer to the National Physical Laboratory and to the British Academy.

When the first of these was started, I was First Lord of the Treasury, and did my best for it from the Government side. But to Rayleigh is due the main credit for originating an institution which in peace and in war has with ever-growing success served the best interests of scientific theory and industrial practice. I now find myself, more than a quarter of a century later, responsible to Parliament, as President of the Council, for the working of this all-important portion of the semi-official machinery which deals with scientific and industrial research.

The story of the British Academy is of the same kind. Henry Sidgwick, not long before his premature death in 1900, was actively promoting its establishment, and induced me to become an original member. The need for it was great, if only from an international point of view. The sciences of Nature were admirably represented by the Royal Society — the greatest of all scientific organizations. It was and is supported, but in no sense supplanted, by the numerous societies and journals which devoted themselves to particular sciences. Besides these there were many societies, which were not so much concerned with knowledge as with beauty, criticism, and art. This left those great branches of learning which had to be distinguished on the one side from the knowledge of

Nature, and on the other from the practice of Literature and Art, unrepresented by any comprehensive organ like the Royal Society. This was injurious to national culture in these days of inevitable specialization; and it was fatal to full international coöperation in some very important branches of learning. This was the gap which the Academy was designed to fill, and does in fact fill. When I promised Henry Sidgwick at the end of the last century to give what help I could to the new body which he was anxious to see established, I no more foresaw that in twenty years or so I should be its President than I foresaw that about the same period I should, as Lord President of the Council, be ministerially responsible for the working of Rayleigh's child — the National Physical Laboratory. These were the accidents of Fortune, mere coincidences, though interesting to me. But they had no connection with that other more important accident which, sixty years before, had given me the opportunity of surmounting the obstacles which commonly hamper the easy interchange of ideas between a freshman and a junior Fellow, and still more effectually between a freshman and a Master of Arts with a great collegiate position.

If Sidgwick and Rayleigh were the two most important friends I made at Trinity outside the circle of my undergraduate contemporaries, they were by no means the only ones. The kindness of all the Dons was unfailing; and, so far as I was personally concerned, I have nothing but good to say of the singular

system which gave me, in my blue-and-silver gown, the right of occasional entry into a society from which my age would naturally have excluded me.

I will not attempt to draw any picture of graduate life at Cambridge during the late sixties seen from the narrow angle of undergraduate vision. All the actors are dead. Not very many, I suppose, are remembered except by specialists in the subjects to which they contributed. Whewell, the historian of the Inductive Sciences and Master of Trinity, died in 1866 — the year I went up — and was succeeded by Thompson, late Professor of Greek. He was a man of very fine presence, and (I believe) an excellent scholar, though his output was small. But his fame among the younger members of the University was mainly due to the caustic commentaries which he made, or was supposed to have made, upon his academic contemporaries. One of the best known of these must have been made in the year he became Master. Charles Kingsley, a better writer of historical novels than of history, the author, among other things, of 'Westward Ho' and 'Hypatia,' resigned the Professorship of History, and was succeeded by Seeley,[1] famous for 'Ecce Homo,' and afterwards for 'The Expansion of England.' The Master of Trinity attended Seeley's Inaugural Lecture, and when asked what he thought of it, gently observed, 'I never could have supposed that we should have had *so soon* to regret the departure of our dear friend, the late Professor' — a

[1] Afterwards Sir John.

not unskilful attempt to blast two historical reputations in one pregnant sentence.

The Master, however, played only a small part in our lives. A more sympathetic, and indeed a more distinguished figure, was Munro, afterwards Professor of Latin, but already famous in the world of scholarship through his edition of Lucretius. His latinity, I need hardly say, was outside my beat. But his personality was most attractive; and his kindness unfailing. At this time it was commonly supposed that his spirits in Hall varied with the changing fortunes of poor Clarissa Harlowe, the story of whose long-drawn tragedy he was then reading for the first time. In strange contrast to him was his contemporary C. W. King, the greatest living authority on engraved gems. He was a weird-looking figure, supposed by us undergraduates to be of great age and most heretical opinions. In 1866 he was certainly not the first; and I am not aware that there was any reason for thinking he was the second.

It was, however, with the younger generation of Dons that I made the friendships which coloured my Cambridge life while I was in residence and later. 'Joey' Pryor, afterwards my tutor; Henry Jackson, an ardent fives player when I was an undergraduate, Professor of Greek and later, a Member of the Order of Merit; Percy Hudson, the most exquisite of violoncellists, also my tutor for a short time; F. W. H. Myers, a poet, an admirable essayist, a founder and leading member of the Society for Psychical Research,

and (incidentally) among the examiners for my Tripos; these are among the friends whom I should hardly have known, and certainly not known intimately, had it not been for the happy dispensation which gave me the chance of meeting them in the familiar intercourse provided by dinner in Hall.

After all, however, not the least important elements in the educational machinery of an English public school are the boys; and not the least important elements in the educational machinery of an English university are the undergraduates — unless, indeed, by university education, we mean no more than the official teaching of the lecturer or the 'coach.' But it has an unofficial side, and to this I now turn.

To me, when 'Little Go' was over and done with, my life at Cambridge was a period of almost unmixed satisfaction. There was nothing unduly irksome about the discipline. I was never taught anything I did not want to learn. I was not required to produce essays on subjects about which there was nothing I desired to say, nor to attend lectures I did not wish to hear. Yet, in spite of this apparent laxity, there was about the whole place an atmosphere of free interest both in things intellectual and in things athletic, which I found infinitely attractive. I was not, indeed, a model student. The casual methods of earlier days were unreformed. But they were practised under the more favourable freedom which a

university can give and a school cannot. There is a much greater variety of fellowship open to undergraduates than there can be to schoolboys. A man in his first year may be on terms of easy friendship with a man about to take his degree; but there can be no equality of intercourse between a boy in the fourth form and a boy in the sixth. To be in the same house, or the same division, or the same eleven, or the same boat, may, if other things be favourable, supply a nucleus round which a schoolboy friendship may crystallize. But, from the nature of the case, they cannot be permanent, nor are they to be compared in their variety with the motives which may unite undergraduates. The poet Gray, in mid-eighteenth century, observed that in his day the only study at Peterhouse was mathematics; the only recreation drinking; and that he had no taste for either! In mid-nineteenth century we were more fortunate. No doubt, if a man was too exclusive to seek friends, or too disagreeable to make them, it was open to him to live alone. But if his tastes were many and his sociability obvious, he would probably be welcome, not in one set only, but in half a dozen; each showing a fresh side of university life, and leaving pleasant memories behind it. Friendly acquaintance readily flourishes in an undergraduate environment, and, if this be stimulated by common association and similar tastes, acquaintance may easily turn to friendship and friendship to intimacy.

As my business for the moment is to talk about my-

self, let me particularize. Some of the most enduring of my Cambridge friendships and some of my greatest pleasures I owe either to a love of tennis (court tennis as it would now be called) or to a love of music. I have already observed how games at Eton were placed almost out of my reach by two weaknesses — physical delicacy and imperfect eyesight. As I grew older, the first of these disabilities gradually vanished; spectacles disposed of the second. I went to Cambridge, therefore, with my natural love of games made more acute by long repression, and my capacity for playing them raised to the normal. Now it so happened that these new activities, even before I left Eton, found a natural outlet at Hatfield. 'Real' tennis-courts are commoner in England than elsewhere; but even in England they are rare. My grandfather, however, maintained one at Hatfield; and there, under the tuition of the 'original' Lambert, father of generations of tennis experts more famous than himself, I learned the rudiments of this magnificent game. I at once fell a victim to its fascination. The smell of damp plaster, considered in and by itself, may not seem exhilarating, but I remember well how on entering the tennis court I breathed it in with what I can only describe as a kind of æsthetic rapture; and I verily believe that in those days I extracted as much concentrated joy from a two hours' game as physical exercise is capable of giving in the time.

I went to Cambridge in the first raptures of this

honeymoon; and the amount of time I spent or wasted in playing tennis myself, or, when this was impossible, in watching it played by others, verged (I admit) on the scandalous. The opportunities, no doubt, were unusually ample. There were no fewer than three courts available. The 'Old' court, said to date from the reign of Charles the Second, beautifully proportioned but undersized; the court at Parker's Piece; and the first of the two admirable courts behind the 'Backs' which was finished shortly before I 'went up.' I assiduously haunted all three, and became well acquainted with those who played on them.

Among these were a good many Dons; indeed, by far the two best players in the University were Blore, a Tutor of Trinity, and Ewbank, a Fellow of Clare. There were others less distinguished at the game, but admirable companions, such as Augustus Austen-Leigh, then a Fellow of Kings, and afterwards its Provost. But the tennis-court friendship to which I owe most was that of George Darwin (afterwards Sir George), son of the great naturalist, and second Wrangler in the year 1868. In due time he became a Fellow of Trinity, Professor of Astronomy, President of the British Association when it visited South Africa in 1905, and the author of very interesting and important researches in the theory of evolution.[1]

[1] He married an American lady (Miss de Puy), who, I am happy to think, is still resident at Cambridge. Their son shows every promise of worthily treading in the ancestral footsteps.

But before all these great things happened to him, he and I played much tennis together, and laid the foundation of a friendship which survived untouched when tennis could no longer be a bond of union, and our opportunities of meeting had of necessity become few. In the days of our youth we had been evenly matched; and I remember how we used to keep the record of our successes and defeats written in pencil on the bottom of a shallow and little-used drawer in the tennis-court dressing-room. There it long remained, until some busybody, who overvalued neatness and cared nothing for fame, ruthlessly destroyed these important records!

It was to George Darwin that I owed my one brief glimpse of his illustrious father. George took me on a visit to their charming home near Down. My recollections of it are most pleasant, though, alas! too vague to bear particular repetition. The elder Darwin's kindness to young people was great; and for us even a story then current, about the psychophysical effects of the hardships endured during his early travels, carried with it no terrors. It was alleged that during his famous voyage in the Beagle, perpetual tossing at sea had left behind it a constitutional weakness which dry land could not wholly cure. It took the form (so ran the legend) of making him feel sick whenever he was bored. Now if, as he believed (though his most ardent followers do not), acquired characteristics may be inherited, what a precious gift he might have transmitted to his descendants!

Imagine having an excuse, at once truthful and conclusive, for terminating all interviews as soon as they began to be tiresome! Who, thus protected, would fear to face the world? He might inspire anxiety among his associates, but he need feel none himself.

Whether there had ever been any foundation for this story, I know not. Certainly I perceived no confirmation of it during my visit. The kindness of the great man, his sympathy and charm, exceeded all that could be demanded by the most self-centred guest, and left a deep impression on my youthful mind. I never saw him again; and little thought, as I took leave of my kindly hosts at Down, that it would some day fall to me to take a leading part in the proceedings by which Cambridge honoured the birth-centenary of one of her greatest sons.

The chief pleasures of my life, putting aside those extracted from books and good company, have always been games, scenery, and music. About Cambridge and tennis I have perhaps said enough; about Cambridge and scenery there is little that requires saying; but I cannot be wholly silent about Cambridge and music. At home my opportunities of hearing good music were small, and of hearing it in the society of those who not only cared for it, but knew something about it, almost negligible. At Cambridge it was very different. There were excellent organists, well-trained choirs, and both among the Dons and the undergraduates, many good amateurs. I know not by what stages, or through what particular influences,

my tastes developed. But naturally, in a university town, concerts of chamber music were more easily organized than operas or symphonies. I do not think I ever heard Wagner before I took my degree in 1869. The reputation of Mendelssohn was somewhat on the wane; that of Brahms was growing. Schumann, Schubert, Beethoven, Handel, and Bach provided our staple fare.

Two among my musical friends were W. Austen-Leigh and Spencer Lyttelton. 'Willie' Leigh, a Fellow of King's, and an Eton man, had a claim on my regard, not only as one of the most excellent of men, an enthusiastic musician, and a very competent pianist, but also in virtue of his being the great-nephew of Jane Austen. Now Jane Austen was a family idol. My mother's enthusiastic admiration was shared by most of her children, and not a few of her grandchildren. In the library at Whittingehame there are two long shelves containing a set of 'Standard Novels' published by Bentley in the middle of the last century. Even the most casual study of their physical condition would suggest to observers, less acute than Sherlock Holmes, two inferences, which (for the family at least) are not without interest. It would show which novels were most popular in the domestic circle; it would also give some indication of the age at which this popularity began. The first inference would be based on the amount of 'fair wear and tear' inseparable from the mere operation of turning over the pages; the second on the cleanliness

of the fingers by which the operation had been performed. The 'Jane Austen' volumes pass triumphantly through both tests. They are worn; and they are dirty. I do not go the length of saying that 'Pride and Prejudice' is, for example, as worn and dirty as 'Midshipman Easy' or 'The Last of the Mohicans.' But worn and dirty it most certainly is.

It was not, however, on the genius of his great-aunt that Willie Austen-Leigh's claims to our regard depended, but on his own excellent gifts both musical and personal. Associated with him from a musical point of view, and more nearly of my own standing, was another Etonian whose friendship had consequences, direct and indirect, which lasted far beyond the years we spent together at Cambridge. Spencer Lyttelton and I heard much music together. We travelled together during more than one Easter vacation, first in Spain, and afterwards in Central Europe, Greece, and Egypt. A few years later we hurried together round the world on an eight months' tour. To me these experiences were not without importance, for between 1876 and 1911 I rarely left the British Isles. But of even more importance than seeing something of the world were the friendships which, through him, I formed with his family and their cousins the Gladstones.

All the Gladstone sons were Eton and Oxford; all the Lytteltons, except the soldier,[1] were Eton and Cambridge. Both families were musical, and the

[1] Now General Sir Neville Lyttelton, G.C.B.

Lytteltons were famous athletes. Of the eight brothers, every one played cricket for Eton against Harrow, and for Cambridge against Oxford. Charles, the eldest (afterwards Lord Cobham), had the reputation of being the most finished bat of his day. Alfred, the youngest, in addition to his fame as a cricketer, was for many years amateur champion of (court) tennis; nor do I believe that in beauty of style his play has ever been surpassed. Of course the eldest and youngest of this immense family (there were four daughters as well as eight sons) were widely separated in age; and it was with my own contemporaries and their juniors that I was naturally most intimate. I well remember that when I was first introduced at Hagley, the two youngest, Edward, the future Head Master of Eton, and Alfred, the future Secretary of State for the Colonies, were still in lower boy jackets.

I cannot omit from any account of these years an episode which, though it happened far from the banks of the Cam, was intimately connected with my University life.

In 1866, or early in 1867, there appeared a book by R. N. Macgregor giving an account of two voyages he had made in a 'Rob Roy' canoe (so named after his famous clansman), the first of which was down the Jordan, the second down the upper waters of the Danube. Three undergraduate friends, Reginald MacLeod, now MacLeod of MacLeod, Arthur Kinnaird, afterwards Lord Kinnaird, and myself, were

fired by the desire to emulate his adventures, or even to surpass them. Disdaining rivers, however famous, we selected for our adventures no less a theatre of operations than the Atlantic Ocean itself. Our scheme was to start from Dunvegan Castle, the residence of Reginald's father — the Chief of the Clan; to skirt the cliffs of Skye till we reached Loch Scavaig; to enjoy, though from a distance, the dark beauty of the Cuchullin hills; to drag our canoes overland, and launch them for a brief space on the sullen waters of Loch Coruisk, and then to traverse the sixteen miles of open ocean which separated us from the island of Rum.

Such was the first part of our design, and it was successfully accomplished. Arthur Kinnaird's canoe gave some anxiety on the passage to Rum; but on the whole our small craft did themselves credit. The Rob Roy canoes, designed by Macgregor and used by us, were thirteen feet long, built of oak, decked with cedar, propelled by a double-bladed paddle, carrying a small mast and single sail. They were just broad enough in the beam to accommodate a single person, who was at once passenger, captain, crew, motor, and ballast. He was seated very near the bottom of the well, where his weight gave stability to the boat, and though his position was comfortable, it was also unchangeable. Except in the smoothest water he could not stand up or even kneel, without risking an upset. Nor, unless he were seated, could the waterproof apron fastened round his waist, and

covering all the well which was not occupied by his person, perform its all-important function of excluding water whether coming from waves or clouds. A sort of small knapsack, also waterproof, carried his clothes, and a cooking apparatus of microscopic proportions made him more or less independent of hospitality, which, as it turned out, was rarely wanting.

We arrived at Rum on the fourth day of our expedition; and there we were most hospitably entertained by Captain MacLeod of Orbost who rented the island — as it happened from my Grandfather Salisbury. Paddling unaided by wind or current can never be a very rapid method of progression, and may easily become a fatiguing one. We had paddled a no small portion of our voyage, and were glad of the luxurious repose provided by our kind host. It happened, moreover, that our night's rest before crossing to Rum was the least satisfactory of the whole expedition. We had slept after our first day's paddle at the shooting-lodge of Ullinish. The second day brought us round the precipitous headland of Talisker to the hospitable farm of Glenbrittle. It was not till the third night that conditions seriously deteriorated. The only accommodation available was a one-roomed cottage from which the occupier was absent. Here, then, was the moment for showing ourselves worthy followers of Mr. Macgregor. Our party possessed three kitchen 'ranges,' and consisted of three potential cooks; among us we should surely

have produced a meal, sufficient if not luxurious. But it was otherwise ordained. Reginald MacLeod, who has recalled so many details of our wanderings, puts the failure down to the hardness of our potatoes; boil them as we would they refused to soften; so (according to his record) all the cooks went supperless to bed.

But the night brought small repose. There were three travellers and only two beds. We tossed up for the privilege of lying alone, and I won. But the gain was doubtful. The indigenous populations of these 'box beds' (as they are called in Scotland) were numerous, hungry, and presumably equally divided. None of us was at ease; but he who lay alone had a double horde to deal with. The first result was a restless night intervening between two delightful but somewhat fatiguing days. The second was the entranced satisfaction with which we enjoyed Captain MacLeod's hospitality when we at last reached his island.

After reposing for two or three days, my companions resolved to visit the small island of Eigg which lies near by. Reginald MacLeod had a personal interest in the expedition, for he was the fifteenth in direct descent from Alastair, Chief of the MacLeods, who about the year 1540 murdered in cold blood every man, woman, and child who then dwelt there. He was naturally anxious to visit the scene of this interesting exploit, and Arthur Kinnaird was happy to accompany him. For some reason or other I did not join the party. It may be that I was

tired, or that I had no desire to make an intensive local study of the ancestral atrocities of the MacDonalds and the MacLeods. I was probably wrong. I am myself of solid Lowland stock, and south of the 'Highland Line' my countrymen, in the sixteenth century, rarely thought it necessary to settle even their serious quarrels by any methods more picturesque than simple assassination or judicial murder. But Highland methods had a quality of their own which could best be approached in their native setting.

Here, then, in a word is what had happened. The MacDonalds and the MacLeods quarrelled. A ship of the MacLeods called at Eigg, and desired to buy provisions. Owing to the feud the request was refused. The ship's crew thereupon seized by force what they were not permitted to purchase, and in revenge the men of Eigg cut off the captain's ears, sent him with two of his men adrift in an open boat without sails or oars, and murdered the rest of the crew — between thirty and forty in number. Such was the provocation. The revenge was the tragedy of Eigg.

The captain was rescued, told his tale to his Chieftain at Dunvegan, who, vowing revenge, promptly attacked Eigg with an overwhelming force. They harried the land, but found not a single living soul except one infirm old woman from whom no information could be extracted. The other inhabitants (three hundred and ninety-five in number) had vanished as if by magic.

The invaders, after searching the island in vain, were in the act of embarking for home when they suddenly became aware of a man watching them from the skyline.[1] He was a spy commissioned to find out whether the coast was clear, and the MacDonalds could safely issue from their hiding-place. The whole situation was changed. The invaders re-landed. They tracked the spy to the cave of refuge, and, with their enemies trapped and completely at their mercy, they proceeded to consider whether any mitigation was to be allowed.

It is evident that, in spite of the vows of unsparing vengeance made in the first heat of indignation, the Chief had qualms. His son had none. Finally a compromise was reached by throwing all the responsibility on Heaven. The wind at the moment was (so to speak) neutral. It blew across the mouth of the cave. If in six hours it still did so, or if it blew outwards from the cave, then Heaven willed that the people should be spared. If it blew into the cave, it willed their destruction. The Chief spent six hours in prayer, though for what wind he prayed my authority does not say. In any case, when the time was accomplished, its direction had changed. It blew into the cave, and the fate of the three hundred and ninety-five dwellers in Eigg was settled beyond appeal. The actual execution the Chief left to his son; and that young man felt no remorse in piling

[1] In my opinion an incredible piece of folly on the part of any Highlander.

up burning brushwood at the mouth of the cave till every soul within it was smothered.

This was the spot selected by my fellow navigators for their evening meal and their night's rest. I gathered on their return that the cooking 'ranges' behaved better or the cooks were more practised than in the hut at Camasunary; and certainly the ancient bones of departed foes must have made a pleasanter couch than a mattress infested by living fleas. But (you will surely ask) were there no ghosts? None were observed; the victims of 1540 made no sign. And yet, can we be sure? Was it by mere chance that during the brief journey back to Rum the wind rose, the sea became stormy, and the shortest of all journeys undertaken by members of our party turned out to be far the most perilous? The verdict had been used to destroy the men of Eigg. Was it to the wind that their uneasy spirits turned to revenge themselves upon the descendant of their destroyer? Did they resent the desecration by a MacLeod of the only resting-place a MacLeod had left them? This is a Highland problem, and only a Highland seer can solve it. For myself I know nothing of ghost psychology; but surely a succession of fifteen (more or less) blameless generations may even in ghostland have sufficed to settle the ancient feud between MacDonalds and MacLeods.

Next day we returned to Skye, crossing to the point of Sleat and sleeping at Armadale. The ocean was in its friendliest mood; and the only peril we

encountered was from the sporting instincts of a gentleman who greeted us on landing. He had, it seems, observed us from afar, and, supposing us at first to be sea monsters of an unknown species, took down his rifle and prepared to add us to his other trophies of the chase. Closer inspection showed him his error, and saved us from a danger against which it had never occurred to us to take precautions.

The next day was the last of our expedition and not the least delightful. We crossed the Sound; we looked into Loch Hourn; we raced through the Kyles on the very top of the tide; and finally in Loch Sligachan brought our wanderings to a prosperous conclusion.

Whether a 'prosperous conclusion' was a consummation we had any right to expect is another matter. On looking back, the whole thing seems a very hair-brained adventure. A Rob Roy canoe is no proper seagoing craft. Three Rob Roys are very little safer than one; in a real emergency their occupants can scarcely hope to render one another effectual assistance. If a canoe at sea be swamped, though it float, it can rarely be emptied. If it be upset, it can rarely be righted. Though both emptied and righted, it can scarcely be reëntered by its late occupant; nor can he seek refuge with a canoeing friend, for no canoe can by any contrivance hold more than one. On the Jordan or the Upper Danube such difficulties are of small account. But in the open sea they may be fatal; and if anything can be worse than the

open sea, it is such coasts as those to be seen in Skye, where for perhaps a whole day's journey you can find no landing-places but the one from which you start and the one you hope to reach. The rocks and precipices along which you skirt may greatly add to your æsthetic pleasure; but they are more to be feared than the ocean which beats against them.

It may be asked, if this be so, why our legal guardians (I was under twenty) permitted us to run risks so obviously useless. At the time I never heard the question raised. But Dr. Robertson, for over fifty years the minister at Whittingehame, tells us, in his little memoir of my mother, that when a suggestion was made to her of the risks of ocean canoeing, she at once replied, 'You would not have me spoil a character?' Surely she was a woman not only courageous but wise.

At all events, whether the policy pursued by our respective parents was prudent or imprudent, it led to no disaster. It was well because it ended well. Two of the canoes which carried us so staunchly more than sixty years ago are now in honourable retirement. Of the third I know nothing, for, alas, Arthur Kinnaird is beyond my questioning. But Reginald MacLeod informs me that his is at Dunvegan in excellent repair, used as a plaything during bathing hours, not only by a younger generation, but by himself — octogenarian though he be. While as for mine, it is enough to say that as the Victory lies in Portsmouth Harbour dreaming of a glorious past, so

my humbler craft floats in the Swan Pond at Terling Place,[1] not, I hope, wholly unmindful of its brief excursion into stormier waters.

Thus far I have said little about the intellectual aspects of my Cambridge life; nor, if the subject is to be looked at in its broadest aspects, do I now propose to make any attempt to remedy the omission. Most men develop between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one; and presumably I was no exception to the rule. But the stages of development are not easily described, and in my particular case are not worth describing. It suffices to say that, so far as general reading was concerned, I did the same kind of thing as an undergraduate that I had already done as a schoolboy, and continue to do now that I am overtaken by old age. I ministered, as the mood took me, to a very catholic appetite for literature, for science, and for history; and I did so without industry, and without system, though with unfailing curiosity, much pleasure, and, I hope, some profit. But these dilettante occupations, be they profitable or unprofitable, are not my present concern. I am talking about Cambridge, and desire rather to say a few words about the studies prescribed by the University authorities, tested by a University examination, and rewarded by a University degree.

I am not sure, however, that I should deal even with the subject thus restricted, were it not that my

[1] My nephew Lord Rayleigh's country house in Essex.

University studies happen to be intimately related to one side of my later activities. This, I may observe, is far from being the common lot. It is not even the lot of all undergraduates who have loved their university and greatly profited by its influences. Unless their professional career happens to be academic, their effective interest in the subjects on which they have been examined must often end with the examination. Nor can it easily be otherwise except in the cases where their university studies have a direct bearing on their life's labours.

I, as it happens, was exceptionally situated. I have explained how, while still at Eton, I became interested in some contemporary phases of the controversy infelicitously described as the 'conflict between science and religion.' In this, of course, there was nothing unusual. Religious perplexities, avowed and unavowed, are a familiar experience of the modern mind, but they show themselves in many different forms, depending on the training and temperament of those whom they assail, and they have very different effects. In my case their most important result, and the only one which concerns my readers, was to direct my wandering curiosity to philosophy, and, in particular, to the philosophy of beliefs. It is true that, before leaving school, I had made but small progress along this line of advance. I had read little or nothing that touched on philosophy, except Lecky's 'History of Rationalism' and the least tedious parts of formal logic. These last I somewhat

airily surveyed in Whately's treatise, and I remember that 'my tutor,' finding me thus engaged, lent me J. S. Mill's famous work, though I am not sure that I took much advantage of his kindness. I should add that a friendly 'coach,' engaged to teach me trigonometry during the holidays, was occasionally induced to relieve the tedium of his official duties by discussing Mill's attack on Sir William Hamilton — a work recently published, which provided the philosophic world of that day with its latest excitement. All this came to very little. But that little was sufficient to determine my academic destiny, and incidentally many other things as well. Evidently in the year 1866 a Trinity freshman, with my tastes and my ignorances, was predestined, if he read at all, to read for the Moral Sciences Tripos, and, if he studied under anybody, to study under Henry Sidgwick. I did both.

Though I never achieved academic success, in this or in any other line, no better fortune could have attended me. The Moral Sciences Tripos (which in those days included not only philosophy, but political economy) was of very recent institution. At Cambridge, till within a comparatively short time of my going there, academic honours could scarcely be reached except by the well-worn road of classical learning or advanced mathematics. In both these great departments of study, Cambridge had played, and was playing, a great part. Among old-time scholars, Bentley and Porson; among my own con-

temporaries and friends, Munro, Jebb, the editor of Lucretius, S. H. Butcher, and Walter Leaf, were known wherever classical scholarship was cultivated. What was true of scholarship was even more obviously true of mathematics and mathematical physics. From the time of Newton to the moment at which I write, no man has disputed the greatness of the services rendered by Cambridge to mankind in these departments of research. But neither in classics nor in mathematics could I hope to do more than admire other people's work ignorantly and from afar. Even the humblest ambition would have been out of place.

For me, therefore, it was most fortunate that when I left Eton our older universities had begun to widen the gateways through which an Honour Degree could be obtained. Not less fortunate was it that Cambridge had adopted a method of introducing philosophy into its degree-giving machinery, which was essentially different from that adopted at Oxford; and, as it happened, far better suited to my particular needs. Sixty years ago (if I understand the matter rightly) the main subject of Oxford 'Greats' was classical civilization as expressed in the languages, the literatures, the political history, and the philosophies of ancient Greece and Rome. A magnificent theme, indeed, but one which, from my point of view, was open to the double objection that it insisted on the study of many subjects on which I did not desire to spend my time, and found little room for the modern

problems in which I was principally interested. It had no School of Moral Sciences.

It may, perhaps, be argued that in philosophy no modern problems can be properly approached except by those who have learned all that ancient philosophy has to teach us. But surely this is not sound doctrine. No one would think of applying it to natural science. No one wishing to understand the stars begins with Ptolemy. No one wishing to understand mechanics begins with Archimedes. It is the latest, not the earliest, results of scientific research which as a rule provide the next stepping-stones on the path of progress.

The case, I admit, is not so clear when we turn from science to philosophy. It may be that the undeveloped suggestions of some ancient sage, after lying neglected or misunderstood through the ages, will suddenly germinate and blossom in new strains of fruitful speculation. I hazard no prophecies; and certainly have no desire either to deny the historic interest of the classical schools of philosophy or to belittle the great thinkers connected with them. But what in fact interested me was not the past, but the present and the future. It was the clash of beliefs held by modern men about the universe, as modern men in their various ways feel driven to conceive it; and naturally, therefore, it was with modern beliefs that I wished to begin. Here again I deem myself fortunate in the circumstances that gave me Henry Sidgwick as my guide.

In him I found one who, by accomplishments and temperament, was ideally qualified to give me exactly what I needed, exactly in the way I most needed it. He had great knowledge and no dogma. Though an admirable scholar, he never exaggerated the importance of pure scholarship, either in its relation to culture in general, or to philosophy in particular. He was as reluctant as his pupil to regard the intensive study of ancient speculations as the proper prelude to all modern research. Writing half-humorously to a very familiar friend in what he describes as a 'peevish' mood, he declares that he 'hates the history of philosophy even more than any other history; it is so hard to know what any particular man thought, and so worthless when you do know it.' [1] But this depressing reflection did not prevent him accumulating and, when appealed to, freely turning to account, his ample stores of philosophic erudition.

Very much more important, however, than his acquirements were his moral and intellectual qualities. In argument, though exceptionally ready and acute, he was as much concerned to understand his opponent's point of view as to defend his own. He not only loved truth more than victory, but the fact was obvious even to those from whom he differed. I am not sure that these attributes in a teacher are the ones which best fill lecture-rooms, or most attract enthusiastic disciples. But to me they seemed al-

[1] *Henry Sidgwick: A Memoir*, p. 149.

together admirable. I was never much enamoured of formal academic instruction. I should never have found it easy to cultivate philosophy in a crowd. I learned best from books and conversation. Henry Sidgwick's teaching, or that part of it from which I derived most profit, strictly conformed to these canons. It was of the most informal character; it was given in his private rooms; it was attended by a very small company. This was exactly to my taste.

It may be added that, while it would never have been easy for him to discuss philosophy in a spirit of dogmatic assurance, it could never have been more difficult than in the years in which I was his pupil. As is now evident from his published correspondence, he was then hard beset by perplexities — ethical, theological, and philosophical — which not only raised serious speculative issues, but involved (in his case) practical decisions of the utmost importance. So far as philosophy was concerned (with which alone I am dealing), he could not have preached a definite system to his pupils, for he was satisfied with no system framed by others, and had worked out no system of his own. To compare the greater with the less, the teacher with the scholar, he was at this period feeling his way, just as I was feeling mine, and, though with a far better equipment, was engaged in the same doubtful and fascinating adventure.

How came it, then (the reader may be inclined to ask), that from the very beginning the course of our speculations developed on somewhat different lines?

It was partly, I think, a difference of interest. He was far more interested than I in the theory of ethics, and perhaps his most important single work was the 'Methods of Ethics,' published two years before the first instalment of my 'Defence of Philosophic Doubt.' Another reason, perhaps, was chronological. He was ten years my senior, and began asking fundamental questions in a somewhat different philosophic atmosphere. When, after completing his brilliant undergraduate career and obtaining his Fellowship, he first had time to turn his thoughts to wider issues, the influence of John Stuart Mill entirely overshadowed English philosophy. Mill's position in the middle years of last century has never, so far as I am aware, been equalled before or since. Sidgwick was far too independent a thinker to remain under the domination of any teacher; but he was at that time in general agreement both with Mill's politics and his political economy, so that he naturally began his philosophic career more or less under his influence. But it gradually waned. By the end of 1866, Sidgwick had shaken himself free. On December 8th he writes to his friend Dakyns, 'Take notice that I have finally parted from Mill and Comte — not without tears and wailings and cuttings of hair.' I do not think we have any record of the stages by which this difficult separation was accomplished, and to the best of my recollection he never spoke to me on the subject either when I was his pupil or in later years. Leslie Stephen, in the 'Life' of Sidgwick which he

wrote for the 'Supplement' to the 'Dictionary of National Biography' of 1902, suggests that it was the unqualified 'agnosticism' of these two thinkers which caused the irreparable breach. If so, his case differed essentially from my own. He felt it impossible to be content with a view of the universe dogmatically limited to 'positive knowledge.' I need not say that I agreed. But I was haunted by a yet more fundamental difficulty. I thought, as I still think, that the beliefs sometimes labelled 'positive knowledge' lacked the rational foundation which philosophers who proclaimed their 'agnostic' creed were obviously bound to supply. They never did supply it. Yet, if there was really a 'conflict between religion and science,' and if philosophy was called in to settle their differences, it seemed to me absurd for any philosopher to start with the assumption that the 'positive' or naturalistic view of the universe was the best to which we could rationally aspire, and that all spiritual or metaphysical theories should be dismissed as the tentative blunders of unemancipated man. Now no one is obliged to philosophize, and few people do. But Mill was of the few. He was intimately acquainted with at least two problems which go to the root of any philosophy of positivism — the problem of the 'external world' and the problem of 'causation.' He knew the doubts suggested by Hume. He knew the answers (in my opinion the unsatisfactory answers) preached by Kant. He himself in his 'Logic,' and in his examination of Hamilton, was much

occupied either with attempts to deal with them or with attempts to evade them. So far as I could judge, he was successful in neither. But it was not of his failure considered by itself that I made complaint. Where he has failed, who has yet succeeded? My grievance was a different one. I could not forgive his incapacity to see that his failure shattered the whole foundation of empirical positivism; and that when this was gone the positive theory of the universe could no longer supply a base of operations for any attack either on metaphysics or religion. Its own position, from a philosophic point of view, was far too insecure.

It would be quite out of place to pursue this line of reflection further. I refer to it only for the purpose of explaining why, in my case, the rejection of Mill's empirical theories was unaccompanied by 'tears, wailing, or cutting of hair.' I went into opposition to his philosophy at a very early stage, though I was then prepared to accept — with reservations — his political economy.

To revert to Sidgwick as a teacher, it would not be easy, I think, to give any further indications of his methods, but I may perhaps mention his procedure on one particular occasion. At the period of which I am speaking (say 1860–69) the idealistic way of looking at the universe found its chief contemporary support, so far as Great Britain was concerned, in the works of Hamilton, of Stirling (in his 'Secret of Hegel'), and of Professor Ferrier (in his 'Institutes of Meta-

physics'). Hamilton, somewhat discredited by Mill's attack, was going out of fashion. The 'Secret of Hegel,' as a baffled wit complained, had been only too well kept by Hutcheson Stirling. Ferrier, on the other hand, was not only concise but lucid; and Henry Sidgwick, who at this time was interested in the 'Institutes,'[1] urged me to review it — not for publication, but as an exercise. It was my first attempt at essay writing, and Sidgwick thought well of it. His main criticism, I remember, was that I had adopted a style too flippant for the subject. The subject was the Universe — and doubtless he was right.

I may seem, perhaps, to have lingered too long over these preparations for my Tripos examination, seeing that, when the examination came, I obtained only a Second Class. Henry Sidgwick was disappointed, and certainly I should have preferred a First myself. But it was in no sense a discouragement. For by this time (November, 1869) I had my own views as to the philosophic work which lay immediately before me. These aspirations, even if known, would not, I imagine, have in the least interested my examiners; nor would their views on such a matter have in the least influenced me. In any case, it must have left their considered judgment on my examination papers unchanged. Henry Sidgwick believed that they considered the quantity of my examination work was not up to a 'First Class' standard. Though I remember

[1] See *Henry Sidgwick: A Memoir*, p. 160.

no details about the Tripos, I have a suspicion that they were right, and that in their place I should have judged like them. Even granting that I had possessed all the knowledge they demanded, I must have written in those days with a facility which has long been lost, if I could have put it during examination hours into a form which would have satisfied both them and me.

The conclusion of my undergraduate career and my departure from Cambridge made no sharp break in my connection with the University. I was released from the unfelt burden of college discipline; I lost my college privileges, the rooms in the New Court, the right to dine with the Fellows at High Table. But, though in the natural order of events most of my contemporaries took their departure at the close of their undergraduate career, many graduate friends remained — chiefly Fellows of Trinity or King's — and these were quickly reënforced by my three younger brothers, who successively came up to the University. Of these the two elder, Frank and Gerald, became Fellows, and remained in residence after taking their degrees, so that I had at one moment no fewer than three members of my immediate family living within the college precincts.

But these were not the only ties of relationship which continued to bind me to Cambridge. As I have already mentioned, my sister Evelyn in 1871 married John Strutt, who, as Lord Rayleigh, served on the Cambridge Royal Commission appointed in 1877,

and in 1881 became for some years head of the Cavendish Laboratory. My sister Nora (Eleanor) in 1876 married Henry Sidgwick, who was appointed Professor of Moral Philosophy in 1875. My brother Frank was the first Professor of Morphology — a post created to retain his services at his own University. My brother Gerald became Fellow in 1877, and subsequently lecturer in classics. Many years afterwards (in 1922) he was chosen as Chairman of the Cambridge section of the Royal Commission then entrusted with the task of examining certain problems connected with University development; so that I had a brother-in-law in 1874 and a brother in 1922 both intimately concerned with enquiries affecting the University to whose interests we were all devoted.

These were family connections. Direct personal ties were, however, not wanting. I received an honorary degree [1] in 1888. I was made an Honorary Fellow of the College in 1902, and a member of the Board responsible for electing to the Knightsbridge Professorship of Philosophy. I was President of the British Association when it met at Cambridge in

[1] Compare the following extract from a letter of H. Sidgwick: 'Our distinguished guests have come and gone, and I shall now communicate to this faithful page my impression of the whole business. It can *only* be expressed here, because, as three of the honorary graduates were Nora's brother, brother-in-law, and uncle (A. J. Balfour, Lord Rayleigh, and Lord Salisbury), and as the whole thing was, by irate Gladstonians, regarded as a demonstration on the Unionist side, I feel in private duty bound to refer to it in public with an air of modest triumph.' (See *Memoirs*, p. 489.)

1904, and, in addition to delivering public lectures on more than one occasion, I was entrusted, in 1909 at the Darwin Centenary Celebration, with the duty of proposing his 'immortal memory.' In 1919, while still a member of the House of Commons, I was made Chancellor in succession to Lord Rayleigh; and so the connection, which for more than sixty years has meant so much to me, is still maintained.

CHAPTER V

PHILOSOPHY

MY TRIPOS examination, though vital to my connection with Cambridge, was but an unimportant episode in my philosophical activities. Before it took place, I was planning the future course of my speculative efforts; after it was over, the plans, such as they were, remained unchanged. I took my degree towards the close of 1869, and the first instalment of my first book, 'A Defence of Philosophic Doubt,' appeared in 'Mind' in 1878; the second (by the kindness of John Morley), in the 'Fortnightly Review' for the same year; the book itself is dated 1879, though I think it was finished in the preceding year. An edition of one thousand copies was published (of course at the author's risk) by Macmillan. It attracted but little attention. Professor Caird (in 'Mind') commented on one of the chapters; and Professor Vaihinger, in his great edition of Kant, dealt with some of my criticisms of that philosopher. Gradually, however, the first edition was exhausted. The very slow but apparently persistent demand for it forced up the price to a level far above that originally fixed; and finally in 1920 I had it reprinted without any alteration of text or paging, except the correction of one or two misprints which I had noted many years before.

The instalment which appeared in the 'Fortnightly' owed this position, not to its intrinsic suitability, but to the friendship of Mr. John Morley, the then editor. I met him for the first time at Brocket Park, once the home of Lord Melbourne, afterwards the property of his kinsman, Lord Cowper, who in his turn had lent it to Henry Cowper, his brother and our host. John Morley, though extending his patronage to my poor production, privately confided to me that he could not understand a word of it. Looking back now over the many years of our chequered intercourse, I am reminded of another case of imperfect comprehension which happened about a quarter of a century later. Morley and I were made to get on together, if only we had not fundamentally differed on every question of political or religious interest. This unfortunate fact left our friendship essentially unchanged, but hampered its manifestations. One such occasion was during the tariff controversy when I was Prime Minister. Morley, professing to find my fiscal policy obscure, challenged me to state its principles on half a sheet of note-paper. Though I felt that such a procedure, if largely imitated, would go far to render great libraries superfluous, I accepted the challenge. The half-sheet of note-paper was produced and reproduced. Is it not to be found by the curious in a volume of my fiscal speeches? I thought it a model of lucidity, but it did not please my friend. He publicly declared his inability to understand it. But somehow the declaration did not ring quite as

true as the private confidence made in the previous century about a generation before.

The last time I saw him was not long before his death. I took Mrs. Drew, Mr. Gladstone's daughter, to lunch at Wimbledon with Mr. Gladstone's biographer. Neville Lyttelton [1] and others were of the party. It does not seem at first sight to have been rich in the elements that make for a great social success. Most of us were old; some of us were hard of hearing; one or two had spent important parts of our lives in acute controversy. But, owing in no small measure to the charm and good spirits of our host, it turned out admirably, leaving naught but happy memories.

I have been led far from the proper subject of this chapter, and must return for a moment to my first book. The title on which I had originally fixed was 'A Defence of Philosophic Scepticism.' But my Uncle Salisbury, whom I consulted on the subject, preferred 'Doubt' to 'Scepticism,' and as the change of words involved no change of meaning, I readily accepted his advice. It was not, indeed, prompted by considerations of philosophic propriety, for to these, I imagine, he was completely indifferent. But since the book, for good or for evil, was certainly coming out, and as he justly supposed that the number of people who would hear of its title must greatly exceed the number of people who would master its contents, it might be as well to make the title as little open to misinterpretation as possible.

[1] General Sir Neville Lyttelton, G.C.B.

Hence his suggestion. He was probably right. 'Scepticism' in popular discourse does perhaps suggest philosophic doubts about religion rather than philosophic doubts about science. It was well to be on the safe side.

At any rate, the result was satisfactory. Even during the four unpleasant years of the Bradlaugh controversy, when 'atheism' became a familiar theme of political debate, it was rarely thought worth while to give point to a platform speech by balancing Tory doubts against Radical disbeliefs. Unless my memory deceives me, Labouchere [1] did it once in defence of his Parliamentary colleague, and a somewhat coarse-grained economist, Professor Thorold Rogers, followed suit. But these gibes were negligible.

The publication of 'Philosophic Doubt' had one indirect result of philosophic value. Among its readers was Mr. Andrew Seth, better known to the world of philosophy and letters as Professor Pringle Pattison. He was at that time assisting Professor Campbell Fraser in his work at Edinburgh University; and after perusing my volume he paid me the compliment of asking me to address his class. I accepted, and a lasting friendship was the result. Of my lecture I have little to say, for I remember little; and if it was written, the manuscript is lost. But this is of no importance. The important thing is that out of this Edinburgh episode there sprung not merely

[1] Labouchere and Bradlaugh represented the Borough of Northampton.

the personal friendship to which I have referred, but also an arrangement under which Professor Pringle Pattison delivered two sets of 'Balfour' lectures, one devoted to Hegel, the other to the philosophers of the Scottish school. Since then he has made contributions to our philosophic literature, original in matter and admirable in style. But surely the full promise of this later harvest was already given in the two modest volumes with which he began the series.

CHAPTER VI

COMING OF AGE

I CAME to man's estate on the 25th of July, 1869, about four months before I qualified for my degree. The legal event was celebrated with games and other fitting festivities, but it made no difference whatever in the accustomed course of our family life. My two elder sisters had already 'come out'; and thereafter, either in my mother's name or in my own, I have always had a residence in London. But Whittingehame, whether legally controlled by my trustees or by myself, remained what it had always been, the country home of my mother and of all her children while they required it. She died in 1872, aged forty-seven — an irreparable loss. I have mentioned in the preceding pages some of those to whom in my early years I have been most indebted. But all my debts to them, compute them how you will, are as nothing compared to what I owe to her love, her teaching, and her example.

I have little of interest to relate about my doings in these years which immediately succeeded the attainment of my majority. I saw something of London society; I heard a great deal of music; I played (court) tennis at Lord's with much enjoyment and some improvement; I invited friends to Whittingehame;

I visited them in country houses; I travelled; in short, I did the sort of things that other young men do whose energies are not absorbed in learning or practising their chosen profession. I had at that time *no* chosen profession; I had, indeed, no dominant occupations, unless I may apply this honourable description to the habit of miscellaneous reading (already described) or to the meditations, intermittently pursued though never abandoned, on the best way of giving effect to my philosophic ambitions.

One result of my coming of age deserves a passing notice. In addition to the Whittingehame Estates, I inherited Strathconan in Ross-Shire, a Highland property purchased by my grandfather, containing a first-class deer forest, as well as grouse moors under sheep, and a salmon river. These, though not first-class, provided plenty of good sport. The shooting-lodge and sporting rights, which had been let during my minority, now came into my occupation, and there for some years we migrated during the shooting season, greatly enjoying the glories of the scenery, the excellence of the sport, and the friendship of all who lived in our remote and isolated valley.

The shooting-lodge was usually full; and it may comfort some anxious hostesses to know that through an accident of architectural design, and in no spirit of unnecessary bravado, we sometimes sat down thirteen to dinner for weeks together without perceptible ill results!

We were usually a company of varied tastes, and

its male members were not always sportsmen, or even fond of mountaineering. The most distinguished of all our guests was of this type — I mean Mr. Gladstone, who, with his wife and daughter (afterwards Mrs. Drew) stayed with us in October, 1872. His visit was memorable, not merely because the visitor was Mr. Gladstone and Prime Minister, but because it terminated with a drama in which I played the fool of the piece, and Mr. Gladstone very nearly became its victim. It happened in this wise:

Mr. Gladstone, who was due in London for a Cabinet meeting on a certain day, October 11th, put off his departure from the Highlands till the last possible moment. The only station which could be reached from Strathconan by road was Muir of Ord — distant about sixteen miles; and to this his luggage was duly despatched. But there was another and much nearer station, Ach-an-Alt by name, about five miles off, which could be reached across moor and loch by an easy path and a short row. This was the route adopted.

Mr. Gladstone and I walked; some of the ladies accompanying us on ponies. The day was fair, the views were fine, and all seemed going smoothly 'according to plan' until the little loch was reached and our brief voyage had begun. Then to my dismay I suddenly realized how seriously I had underrated the hazards of inland navigation. The distance, indeed, was short; but so also was the time at our disposal. The wind was strong, our boatman was old,

and our boat was better fitted to promote the leisurely activities of fly-fishing than to speed the journey of a belated Minister. Conceive, then, my feelings when looking westward up the Strath I saw our train approaching with ill-timed punctuality. The distance we had still to traverse from the boat to the shore, and from the shore to the station, was not great, but there was no landing-place, and the undrained bog was soft and very wet. Mr. Gladstone, though physically very powerful and vigorous, was well over sixty; and in quickness of foot, though in nothing else, I was better equipped. I therefore ran on ahead, splashing through the shallow pools and frantically waving to the driver of the approaching train. My reflections were not pleasant. In those days I knew little of Cabinet Ministers and still less of Cabinets. But it required small knowledge of the British Constitution to realize how great would be the inconvenience, and how serious might be the embarrassments, produced by the sudden postponement of a Cabinet meeting. All the inconveniences and all the embarrassments would, not unjustly, be put down to me! How was I to reply?

Fortunately, as the reader will have foreseen, the catastrophe was avoided. I explained the situation as well as my want of breath permitted; the great man was treated with all honour; and as the train ran slowly out of the station, I saw with intense thankfulness a pair of wet socks hanging out of the carriage window to dry, and felt that, however deeply

I had sinned against the laws of well-considered hospitality, I had not inflicted upon my distinguished visitor the added horrors of a cold in the head.

Even those who read this anecdote without impatience may justly complain that it conveys little impression of Mr. Gladstone's personality. This is true; nor, had my critics been of the party on this occasion, would they have found much to impress them in its principal member, beyond physical vigour and a most admirable temper. A Highland track presents only intermittent opportunities for conversation, and Mr. Gladstone, like other good talkers, liked a fair field. But, give him this, and he would talk most admirably. No doubt he had his critics. It was said of him, I think with truth, that he had little wit. It was said, I think without truth, that he had little humour. It may be admitted that he did not always appreciate the humour of other people. It may be admitted that to some audiences (and those not the most despicable) his own humour sometimes failed to make appeal. Yet it is absurd to say that he had none. You may often search Hansard for it in vain. But pray remember that Mr. Gladstone, as a Parliamentary artist, should least of all men be judged by the arid accuracy of a *verbatim* report. So treated, the rarest qualities of the spoken word may evaporate in a night, and of all such qualities, humour is perhaps the most volatile.

I remember John Morley telling me (it was in his pre-Gladstonian days) that Gladstone's humour was

like 'grinning through a horse-collar.' It may not have contained the raw material of good talk or good literature; but, with all deference to John Morley, it was certainly excellent debating. It turned the laugh, if not the argument, against his victim; it was spontaneous, provoked by the occasion and suited to it. Though it was sometimes cruel, the cruelty was never premeditated; it was therefore rarely resented by the House; and if it seemed a little flat as reported in the morning papers, what then?

Such Parliamentary horse-play, be it good or bad, has, however, no legitimate place in civilized conversation; and we may be sure that Mr. Gladstone, outside the House of Commons, never made a butt of any man. If the long and successful practice of public oratory in any way marred his lightness of touch, it was not that he ever misused his gifts of Parliamentary ridicule, but that he sometimes overused his methods of Parliamentary exposition. Trifles, so it seemed to his younger friends, were apt to be treated like questions of State, seriously, even solemnly, and in a high moral key. The merits of a bottle of port would be expounded as eloquently and as earnestly as the demerits of some favourite enemy, man, class, institution, or country. His talk lacked no charm but wit, and no solid merit but (now and then) a want of proportion.

But when all deductions were made, how admirable was what remained! I had friends who used to say (quite mistakenly) that after he left Oxford in 1830

with a First in 'Mods,' a First in 'Greats,' and high mathematical honours, he learned little of importance but what was taught him by his own observations and experience. He knew nothing of any philosophy later than Bishop Butler, nothing of science worthy of mention, a little of modern theology except through the Tractarians. But even if these things were true or near the truth, what is it to the purpose? There is enough in this catalogue of acquirements to provide the necessary background for good conversation in any society, learned or unlearned, serious or gay, which was other than purely technical. And Mr. Gladstone had qualities which would have made him a good talker with half his learning and a tenth of his experience; for he was natural, tactful, and, if need be, eloquent; totally without pretension and totally without spite. The listener who would not be content with merits like these must be hard to please.

I have heard it said that he treated the lighter side of life in too solemn a spirit; and he may have sometimes erred on the serious side. It gives me, therefore, peculiar pleasure to remember that I once heard him, under strong family persuasion, take the bass part in an old Glee, which was by no means solemn. The first lines, I think, run as follows:

> 'Mein Herr Van Dunk,
> Though he never was drunk,
> Sipped brandy and water gaily.'

It is set to music which reflects the unpretentious vigour of the verse, and it includes a rollicking solo

assigned to the bass, and on this occasion sung by the Prime Minister with admirable spirit. The audience, unfortunately, was very small and intimate; but the experience was memorable, and certainly not solemn!

No one can be more conscious than I of the utter insufficiency of glimpses like these to reveal Mr. Gladstone as he appeared in private life. A generation has passed since his death; almost a hundred and twenty years have passed since his birth; of the vast multitudes of persons who heard him in the House of Commons, or on the platform, but a small and fast dwindling number remain; and of that number the fraction that had any knowledge of him in the intimacy of home life must be insignificant, indeed. I may claim to be one of them, and not the least appreciative. But my opportunities turned out to be limited.

Political differences arose all too soon; and though they left the foundations of friendship unshaken, they could not but diminish the opportunities of freely building on them. In 1896, however, I had the good fortune to enjoy, and by a happy accident to record, a visit to Hawarden. Between that date and the Strathconan episode which I have just narrated, a quarter of a century had elapsed. 'Bulgarian Atrocities,' 'Peace with Honour,' the 'Kilmainham Treaty,' 'Remember Mitchelstown,' and other 'slogans,' which in their day stirred party feeling to the depths, had already become things of the past. Let the

reader imagine my sister Alice and myself riding our own bicycles from the station to Hawarden Castle. Those who are interested in changes of taste may care to note that at this time there was a general craze among our friends for this mode of progression. It was faster than the carriage horse, and the motor was not yet invented. The humbler vehicle in the mean while ministered to the growing appetite for speed.

Here in its integrity is my contemporary account, written to Lady Elcho (now Lady Wemyss), of the Hawarden visit. Allowance must, of course, be made for the very casual wording of a letter never meant for publication:

BRADBURY'S PRIVATE HOTEL
NORTH BERWICK
Tuesday-Wed., Sept. 1–2, 1896

So you are curious to hear about my visit to Hawarden and the G.O.M. There is not much to tell. We discussed no current politics, we interchanged no confidences on Foreign Affairs, even the Armenians were (in spite of the newspapers) left severely alone. Nevertheless it was pleasant, and I am glad I went. How many years it is since I was there before!

I rode up from the station on my 'byke' — an uninteresting incident in itself, but amusing in that it shocked the Old Man. He thought it unbefitting a First Lord of the Treasury, and chaffed very amusingly about it. He is and always was in everything, except essentials, a tremendous old Tory, and

is peculiarly sensitive in the matter of dignities. I thought him looking better than when I saw him in London, but nevertheless old and blind and deaf. He bitterly resents being two and a half inches shorter than in his prime, and willingly dilates on the things he can no longer do in the way of physical endurance. But the mind seemed to me as alert as ever, and beyond a certain tendency to repetition, there appear no signs of senility.

As you know, I never can recall a conversation, nor do I think we any of us said anything much worth recalling. Some odds and ends of reminiscences may, however, amuse you.

Talking of the impossibility of *demonstrating* that Manning in getting rid of Archbishop Erington designed to succeed him, G. observed that it reminded him of a procedure of Palmerston in (I suppose) 1859. It appears that when the Tories resigned, the Queen sent *first* for Lord Granville. Lord Granville, instead of at once expressing his inability to form a Ministry, said he would consult Lord Palmerston and Lord John Russell. (Rather as if Asquith were under like circumstances to consult Harcourt and Rosebery.) He went first to Palmerston. P. not having the least intention of taking office under Granville, or indeed under any one else, said he would serve if J. Russell would — knowing perfectly well that Russell would not. Russell, who, 'though not without faults was quite straightforward,' declined plump, as was foreseen: and so it came about that Palmerston became

Prime Minister for six years, that Granville never became Prime Minister at all, and yet that no one can say that Palmerston ruined Granville's chances by refusing to join his Government.

Gladstone, as you may perceive, does not like Palmerston, in spite of the fact, or because of the fact, that he was for many years his colleague. I hasten to add that the dislike was, I believe, reciprocal.

On two other statesmen of the last generation did he make comments — Melbourne and Sir J. Graham. Of Melbourne he said that he had not yet had justice done him, and that the Melbourne Papers, which (on his suggestion) Cowper had published, though an important, were still an inadequate, contribution to a judgment of his character. Of Parliament and people (said Mr. G.) he may not have known much; but he was perfect in two relations of life. He was perfect to the Queen, and he was perfect to his colleagues. He and Lord Aberdeen (the Prime Minister) were the two men most gifted with the faculty of uttering concise and pregnant sayings. Yes (said I), but while Lord M.'s sayings were witty, Lord A.'s at the most were wise. Mr. G. seemed dubious over this, and asked me for examples. I remembered some, but as they were somewhat profane, I thought them unsuitable for the Hawarden luncheon-table on Sunday afternoon!

I suppose it was in connection with Lord Melbourne that he said there were three men whom he might

have known, whom he never knew, and whom he greatly desired to have known — Scott, Melbourne, and Dr. Arnold — an odd trio.

He showed me a volume of his Journal, a little flat book containing a space of about two years. 'You may take' (said he) 'the three proverbial courses about a journal: you may keep none, you may keep a complete and "full-blooded" one, or you may keep a mere skeleton like mine with nothing but bare entries of time and place.' He kept his without break or intermission from the time he was fourteen till his eyes were attacked by cataract. An extraordinary feat!

Talking of journals, he said the most important one for the history of the early middle half of this century would undoubtedly be the (as yet) unpublished one of Sir James Graham. I remember the Duchess of Leinster was contemplating editing some of his reminiscences (?) — though I do not know whether the journal was to be included. The scheme was, I think, abandoned (for some reason which I never heard) before her illness. Of Graham himself he said that in his opinion he was a *very good* man, an assertion he repeated with even more than his usual emphasis. He had, however, two defects — he was *rash*, and he was *timid*. When asked (not by me) for illustrations of these characteristics, Mr. G. declined on the score of discretion from giving any examples of timidity — but as an instance of his rashness, quoted a speech in which, speaking of Ireland in (I think)

1844, he said, amid tumultuous cheers, that 'the limit of concession had now been reached,' while at that moment Peel, the Prime Minister, sitting next him on the Bench, was contemplating a scheme for the endowment of Maynooth.

Enough now of this old world political gossip about those long gathered to their fathers, and questions long ago of matters of history. They amuse me much more than the gossip of to-day or yesterday, for they have no possible relation to business; but I do not expect they will amuse you. Only remember you *asked* for them.

We were never more than eight at dinner, as a large number was supposed to be too much for Mr. G., now very frail and old. But the eight were varied at each meal by selecting different members of the family from surrounding houses. In the Castle itself were Harry and Herbert Gladstone, the Drews and Lady F. Cavendish. In the immediate neighbourhood were the Bishop of Rochester and five children, the Dean of Lincoln (married to a Miss Gladstone) and four children, Stephen Gladstone, the Rector of the Parish, and *his* family, Albert Lyttelton, and possibly (for my powers of numeration are somewhat overstrained) yet others. Patriarchal and attractive; but so far as the third generation were concerned rather confusing. With the second generation I had friendship or acquaintance of old standing.

After church on Sunday morning Mr. G. took me (by a circuitous route so as to avoid passing through

the mob of spectators who watch his exit) to see his 'Hostel.' The Hostel is an old building of which he has acquired possession, and a few yards off he had put up a wooden library containing now about forty thousand volumes, but capable of holding many more. Here he desires that students desiring quiet opportunities of reading or writing, clergy, or other hard-worked persons desiring a studious holiday, may find a haven. They live in the Hostel at a small weekly charge, and they may if they choose have the run of the library. There is a librarian who, under the style and title of 'Warden,' controls the whole institution, which Mr. G. has amply endowed. Would that all his schemes for the public good had been as admirably contrived! The Hostel is almost if not quite within the precincts of the churchyard, but I understand that no preference is shown, in the selection of guests, for any particular denomination. A Unitarian Minister is about to come for the purpose of studying the Oxford Movement. When I suggested that perhaps enough had been written on that not illimitable subject, the Old Man would not have it at any price!

Have I anything else to tell you? I think not — unless you are interested by chance in the question of foreign competition, which I should imagine would be as much out of your line as anecdotes about Lord Aberdeen! Herbert told us that on the Board of the M.S. and L. Railway [1] they had been recently con-

[1] Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway. (*Editor's note.*)

sidering offers for *steel rails*. The cheapest tender was by the great German firm of Krupp — and this for a line running through the very centre of our own steel industry! Mr. G. admitted that this seemed a serious case, but said that as a rule he rejoiced to hear of instances of successful foreign competition. 'Nothing less,' said he, 'will rouse the British producers. John Bull is a wonderful fellow when he *is* roused; but he cares nothing for perfection in itself; he has no strivings after the ideal' (not Mr. G.'s word), 'and he can never be made to do anything better than he is compelled to do by the necessities of the case.' So much for Mr. G. on his countrymen. I am not sure that he is right.

On Monday Alice and I went off about ten-thirty and bicycled down to the station, escorted by a huge family party composed of stray atoms from all the households I have mentioned. Mr. G. came full of interest and amusement to see us off, and not content with this, he *ran* (these eyes beheld him!) across the lawn to a point where a turn of the road brought the procession again quite close to him. This is, I think, after all, the most interesting thing I have to tell you in the whole visit. He really does know how to grow old with cheerfulness and dignity, and if only Providence had endowed him with the gifts which make theologians and antiquarians instead of with a taste for theology and antiquities, his mind seems to me quite elastic enough to do good work in his favourite studies — age notwithstanding.

This I believe to be certainly the longest and possibly the dullest letter I have ever written with my own hand! But again I say you brought it on yourself!

I have expended so much time on the Gladstone family, and on chronicling what the Bishop of Rochester describes as a 'Memorable visit,' that my two days spent at Walmer, and the doings at my nephew's [1] coming-of-age, must remain unchronicled.

I am here again in our old delightful hunting grounds, and though North Berwick has shown its appreciation of my presence by raining continuously ever since my arrival, I am delighted to be back.

[1] Robert John Strutt, now Lord Rayleigh. (*Editor's note.*)

CHAPTER VII

ENTRY INTO POLITICS

I HAVE already noted that, when I took my degree at the age of twenty-one, I had no profession and no more settled purpose in life than to deal with certain aspects of philosophy which I deemed of immediate importance. But this does not mean that my only interests were philosophical. Though I had a confirmed taste for abstract theorizing, I was by no means clear that abstract theorizing alone would content me; and schemes involving other forms of activity floated lazily through my mind. History? Essay-writing? Politics? All had their attractions. Which should I select?

One advantage of history and essay-writing was obvious. Were I to adopt them, it would rest entirely with me to determine when, how, and where I should pursue my designs. I could not, of course, make any one read what I wrote. On the other hand, no one could prevent me writing as I pleased; and since my livelihood in no way depended upon the popularity of my productions, I should be the master of my fate. The case with regard to a political career was different. It is true that I had no difficulty in selecting my party. Though party politics were not much discussed at home, the family tradition on both sides was Conservative. My father and his father had both

been Conservative Members for Scottish seats. My mother's brother, her father, and her grandfather had all held office in Tory or Conservative Governments. On the other hand, many of my most 'enlightened' friends at Cambridge were 'Liberal in politics. But this was a fact of no particular significance. In the sixties the line between the moderate Liberal and the moderate Conservative was more than usually blurred. If the opinions of the two parties were to be judged by the policies of their respective leaders, it would be difficult to find a more 'Conservative' Prime Minister than the 'Liberal' Lord Palmerston, or a more 'Democratic' Prime Minister, than the 'Conservative' author of the Reform Bill of 1867, or one more anxious for social reform than the author of 'Coningsby' — Mr. Disraeli. Speaking for myself, I saw few merits in the fundamental views of the Radical Party either in relation to domestic politics, imperial developments, or foreign affairs; while the speculative outlook of the philosophic Radicals filled me with contempt. J. S. Mill, then Member for Westminster, their acknowledged leader, once committed himself to the statement that the Conservatives were the 'stupid' party. If Mill really thought this, my own course was clear.

But though it was easy enough to choose my course, it was not at all obvious how to pursue it. If a political career was to be seriously entered upon, a seat in the House of Commons was a necessity, and this required a constituency willing to elect me. Where was this

constituency to be found? My grandfather had sat for a borough in Fife, and afterwards for the County of East Lothian (Haddingtonshire). My father had sat for the Border Boroughs. But Scotland in the years of which I speak and for many years afterwards was predominantly Radical, and no constituency with which I was there connected by birth or interest offered a favourable opening to a Conservative. Moreover, my political ambitions were cool, so that, all things considered, I was well content to let things slide.

Then suddenly the situation changed. I was lunching, I remember, with Lady Salisbury in Arlington Street, when my uncle, with whom I had never seriously discussed either my political opinions or my political future, tentatively approached the question of the representation of Hertford. The sitting member was Baron Dimsdale,[1] a zealous politician, silent in the House, but devoted to his Parliamentary duties, and to the interests of his constituents. He had resolved, for private reasons, not to stand again. Would I consent to be candidate in his place? This was the question.

I assented without hesitation. At Hertford, Baron Dimsdale was very popular; I was quite unknown. He was, therefore, not an easy man to follow. But he promised to use all his influence on my behalf, and as

[1] It was, I think, Baron Dimsdale's great-grandfather who was created a Baron by Catherine II of Russia. He cured her of an eye-complaint.

the political tide was running against Mr. Gladstone and his Government, the omens were favourable. When it came to the point I was not in fact opposed — though this piece of good fortune could not then be foreseen.

Hertford, which I represented from January, 1874, till its separate political existence was brought to an end in 1885, was a very ancient borough. I myself had the honour of witnessing (though not as Member) the pageant which celebrated the thousandth anniversary of its foundation. Its two most important neighbours were the owners respectively of Hatfield and Panshanger, the Lord Salisbury and the Lord Cowper of the day. Both families had property in the borough, and both for many generations had taken a keen interest in its politics. They belonged by tradition to different parties, and in 1873, Henry Cowper, Lord Cowper's brother, was the Whig Member for the County division in which the Town of Hertford was situated.

I do not think that the intimate friendship which I soon afterwards enjoyed with the Cowper family had then begun. But as in 1874 the borough was uncontested, party politics could not in any case have become the occasion of social embarrassment. The only relic of ancient rivalries that came under my notice was a single interruption by one of my supporters who tried to enliven the monotony of an electoral 'walk over' by shouting out, 'Who killed Sarah Stout?' The reader may perhaps ask what relevance

this strange question had to any election at any period of English history, and in particular to an election in the year 1874. I will tell him, for the story is curious.

One hundred and seventy-five years before I stood for Hertford, a brother of the first Lord Cowper, and then Member for the borough, was charged with the murder of Sarah Stout, a beautiful Quakeress, who was found dead in the river Lee. Spencer Cowper was tried and acquitted. But feelings ran high. The accused man was an ardent Whig; and his Tory opponents easily convinced themselves that, if not the murderer of the poor girl, he was indirectly responsible for her death. The party taunt, thus uttered in my presence a century and three quarters after the tragic event to which it referred, was but the faintest echo of an ancient wrong. Its meaning cannot have been understood by the mass of those who heard it — perhaps not even by him who uttered it; surely a singular survival, even in a county where survivals are familiar.

The fact that I was unopposed at Hertford relieved me of all fears lest my inexperience in matters electoral should inflict some injury on the party fortunes; but it did not suffice to make house-to-house canvassing an exhilarating occupation, nor did it in the least mitigate my anxieties as a public speaker. In this capacity my practice was insignificant. I had been (and still am) a member of the Cambridge Union. But I never took part in its debates, and I re-

member but two occasions on which a speech was required of me before I became a candidate; one was at a tenant's dinner in the Marble Hall at Hatfield, when my grandfather insisted on my proposing some toast (or was it responding for the visitors?); the other was at my own coming of age. On both occasions, though the audiences were friendly and the subjects trifling, my preliminary sufferings were acute. It is, therefore, no matter for surprise that I contemplated with serious misgivings my first appearance at a public meeting convened to hear my opinions on great affairs. Once on my feet, things went better than I had dared to hope. It was not so much that I felt at ease as that I had no leisure to feel anything but the absorbing effort to find the words which would least inadequately express the arguments I was struggling to enforce.

It has been a serious misfortune to me that, throughout a lifetime largely occupied in public speaking, my want of verbal memory has always made verbal preparation impossible. Randolph Churchill could repeat a column of 'The Times' after a single perusal; if, therefore, he had time to write his words, he could secure without difficulty whatever degree of verbal finish he thought desirable. Bonar Law, smoking comfortably in his armchair, could compose a speech involving the most complicated arguments and figures without putting pen to paper; and, having done so, could use it, in whole or in part, without misplacing a word. I never could discover

merely by listening, whether Lord Oxford (Asquith) was speaking impromptu, was repeating from memory, or was reading from a manuscript. Always the right word came, and always without an effort. This unfortunately has never been my case. After more than half a century of speech-making, there still remains a lamentable difference between my written and my spoken word — a difference not the less lamentable because some of my friends profess themselves quite unable to detect it.

I do not, of course, suggest that the particular difficulties under which I have always laboured had no compensating advantages. If it be very easy for a man to reproduce in public a speech which he has composed in private, he will probably do it too often. There will be no instinctive adaptation of the form of his oratory to the temper of his audience. His powers of debate will tend to fall below his powers of exposition. He may find it easier to explain a complicated measure than to defend it against unforeseen attack. But, on balance, the advantage must surely be with those who have the gift of verbal preparation rather than with those who have it not. They may easily become as good debaters as the readiest of their rivals (all the speakers I have named debated admirably); and they can aspire to a sustained finish of expression quite beyond the reach of the most practised improvisation.

It was in no small measure due to these inborn

disabilities that I deferred my first utterances in the House of Commons till the end of my third Parliamentary session — August 10, 1876. The full ceremonial of a 'maiden speech' I never dared attempt. The prefatory appeal for an indulgent hearing, the well-known platitudes of the central argument, the polished peroration, and sonorous close would have been inexpressibly repulsive during the process of manufacture, and in my unaccustomed hands would certainly have gone to pieces in the hour of trial. If I was to break my Parliamentary silence, it must be in some less artificial fashion.

That the silence ought to be broken I did not deny. During my first and perhaps my second session silence was permissible, even praiseworthy. I must be allowed time to listen and look around; and during the end of my second session and the beginning of my third (1875–76) I had other preoccupations. I was engaged, for example, in writing, 'Philosophic Doubt,' and in hurrying round the English-speaking world [1] with my friend Spencer Lyttelton. Moreover, politics were at the moment undeniably flat. Such excuses (and there may have been others) sufficed for the moment. But when, in the spring of 1876, I had returned from the antipodes, Lady Salisbury made no secret of her opinion that my third session should not be allowed to close without overt signs of Parliamentary activity; and though my uncle, as was

[1] Canada, the United States, New Zealand, Australia, and home by Ceylon and the Red Sea.

his wont, abstained from all unasked advice, I never doubted that he took the same view. So in my heart did I.

How, then, should I proceed? The object of a full-dress 'maiden speech' is to show members of the House of Commons how admirably one of their untried colleagues is able to address them. But for reasons already indicated this was no object of mine. I knew well enough that I was no Heaven-born orator. What as yet I did not know was how far, on a stage so unfamiliar and so alarming as the House of Commons, I could maintain unembarrassed the thread of my discourse, pursue an argument without the aid of notes, and find on the spur of the moment words more or less adequate to my ideas. Until I learned something from experience on points like these, I could not make up my mind whether it was worth my while to make politics my profession. I did not doubt that I had capacity, for modesty was never my worst fault. But I had some misgivings as to whether I had capacity of the right kind; and my object, therefore, was not to impress the House with my eloquence — a task far beyond my powers — but to convince myself that I possessed, in however rudimentary a form, the qualities required in an assembly which lives by debate.

How could this task be best accomplished? It seemed to me that the Parliamentary environment in which I should be most at my ease would be one in which the occasion was informal and the audience

small. Informality could best be secured by choosing a period when the House was in Committee. How about a small audience? At first sight nothing could seem easier of attainment. The art of emptying the Chamber is widely diffused and requires no special cultivation. But then, unfortunately, the House I dreamed of addressing was not one already thinned by my own eloquence, but one where the audience had been rendered 'fit though few' either by the exertions of preceding speakers, or by the unattractive character of the subject under discussion. How was this to be secured? The surest and the most dignified expedient was to select as my theme a question undeniably important, but intrinsically dull; perhaps with a technical side, and in any case recalcitrant to rhetorical treatment.

These strategic principles were supplemented in actual practice by judicious tactics. On August 10th, the business before the House was the Committee stage of the Indian Budget — introduced on this particular occasion in an able speech by the Under-Secretary of State (Lord George Hamilton). It dealt with an immense variety of subjects only connected with each other by the fact that they all related to India. No party issue was raised; no division was expected; the House was ill attended; and of the members present the majority were kept in their places not so much by the desire of any individual to hear what others had to say as by his fear of missing the chance of saying something himself. This at least was my case.

But though in this respect I resembled my neighbours, in another I probably stood alone. They wanted an audience. I on this occasion wanted none. I desired security, not success; and when the House was in Committee, when the attendance was poor, and no dramatic developments were possible, security was within my reach. Should I feel myself on the brink of failure, I had only to sit down, and in all probability no man save the next speaker would notice the event, and he would certainly be grateful!

Even these precautions did not content me. In order to complete the story, let me add that my chosen theme was Indian silver currency, and my chosen hour was about eight o'clock. The reader least experienced in House of Commons habits will realize that in these conditions I enjoyed to the fullest extent the advantages of speaking in a silent and friendly solitude.

So much for my first appearance on the floor of the House. Some may be inclined to ask what purpose is served by this circumstantial account of a dull speech, on a dull subject, delivered in an empty House by an anxious beginner. It contains no hints on the arts of debate. It says nothing either to warn or encourage intending orators. It certainly does not present the speaker himself in an interesting, still less in an heroic, light. Wherein, then, lies its interest?

Its sole interest is autobiographical, and its sole importance for me lies in the fact that it marks the real beginning of my Parliamentary career. To be

sure, my success was but a modest one; yet it sufficed. No one will ever know what I said on this (to me) all-important occasion; for I have forgotten all the details myself, and there is little in Hansard to remind me of them. I remember only that I spoke on Indian currency, and that in my own opinion I made my case. I had thus taken the first step in my Parliamentary adventure, and taken it without disaster. For the moment this sufficed.

The House of Commons experiment which I have just described occurred at a moment when great events in the international world of peace, war, and high diplomacy, were so developing as to affect the destinies of millions of quite insignificant persons of whom I happened to be one.

Disraeli's Government had so far occupied itself quietly and usefully with domestic measures which stirred few passions and did much good. It had, for example, dealt with the trades-union problem in a manner which deserved and obtained the gratitude of the trades-union leaders. It had abolished Church patronage in Scotland — a measure which greatly interested me as a warm supporter of the Scottish Church. These were domestic measures of real value but small dramatic interest. And when Spencer Lyttelton and I left Liverpool in the summer of 1875 for our eight months' journey round the world, European skies were still serene, though the first signs of coming storms could already be discerned. By the time we returned in the spring of 1876, the

Eastern Question was already upon us, and its complicated embarrassments were daily increasing.

I do not propose to write its history. But it may be convenient to remind younger readers, whose personal interest in international politics centres round the Great War and its consequences, that the questions about the Near East which still make statesmen anxious belong to the New Era; while 'The Eastern Question,' which shook the Western world in 1876–78, was essentially an episode in the closing scenes of the long-drawn story of Turkish domination in south-eastern Europe.

It must not, of course, be imagined that the statesmen who gathered together at Constantinople in the winter of 1876–77 supposed themselves to be dealing with a stable system. Though none foresaw the Treaties of 1919, few doubted that Turkey as a European Power was moribund, and that the Constantinople Conference was a late stage in the process of inevitable decay. How, indeed, could it be otherwise? What permanence could a political system possess which depended on the domination of a militant minority over peoples differing fundamentally from it in race and religion, superior to it in economic efficiency, in capacity for modern culture, and in aptitude for modern science and modern administration? Such a system, even though it be undisturbed from outside, is sure to be unstable as long as its elements refuse to mingle. If it does not break up at the centre, it will gradually contract from the periphery.

One alien element after another will be torn from it, till its diminished territories are no more than sufficient to accommodate a population in which the majority now belong to what was once a dominant minority.

But the process of contraction can hardly be smooth or simple. In the physical world it is associated with earthquakes, volcanic outbursts, and tidal waves. In the world of international relations it sets up stresses and strains so complicated that diplomacy can scarcely disentangle them or history describe them.

Every Government in Europe looked at them from a different point of view, and each was deeply concerned in understanding the points of view adopted by the others. Let me in a paragraph or two summarize the situation as it appeared to the British Cabinet in the earlier stages of the Eastern crisis.

In 1875, the Turkish province of Herzegovina rebelled against its rulers. Shortly afterwards Serbia went to war on the side of the rebels, and Bulgaria followed suit. The Turkish Government was frightened, brutal, and incompetent. It dealt with the situation cruelly and stupidly. Civilized opinion was deeply shocked; and on British initiation it was finally resolved by the Powers who were parties to the Treaty of Paris (1856) which concluded the Crimean War — England, France, Italy, Russia, and Turkey — to confer together on the situation. Constantinople was to be the place of meeting; and Lord

Salisbury, then Indian Secretary, was commissioned to represent Great Britain. In consultation with Lord Derby (then Foreign Secretary) he wisely determined to visit Paris, Berlin, and Vienna on his way to the Conference, to make himself acquainted by personal intercourse with the views of the ministers responsible at the moment for the foreign policies of their respective countries. This was what he found: [1]

In Paris on the 21st of November, 1876, the Duc Décazes (the French Minister) expressed a mild inclination towards a European occupation of Turkey in Europe which would involve (in his view) the control of Bosnia by Austria, of Macedonia by England, and of Bulgaria by Russia; but he admitted the existence of 'serious difficulties.'

On the 23d, at Berlin, Prince Bismarck expressed his views, or what he wanted Lord Salisbury to think were his views, with his accustomed plainness of speech. In his opinion Turkey was moribund. He took a deep interest in the fate of her European possessions, not because he cared about the well-being of the Balkan population, to which he was quite indifferent, nor yet because Germany desired any addition to her own possessions. Germany did not want territory; she wanted security. A war of *revanche* by France was his incessant preoccupation. He thought it inevitable, unless a friendly understanding between

[1] I obtain the following impression from reading the original documents which Lady Gwendolen Cecil has so admirably presented to us in her *Life of Lord Salisbury.*

the three Emperors — German, Russian, and Austrian — could be maintained. Therefore, it was that good relations between Russia and Austria were of vital interest to Germany; and from this in turn it followed that after the expected demise of the 'sick man' (Turkey), any quarrelling over the inheritance between Germany's eastern and her southern neighbours must at all costs be avoided. It will be seen that when, in 1876, Prince Bismarck discussed the Danube, his real anxiety concerned the Rhine.

Lord Salisbury reached Vienna on November 25th. Count Andrassy, the Austrian Foreign Minister, was a Hungarian magnate, and his Hungarian nationality somewhat embarrassed his Austro-Hungarian policy. He was, moreover, much influenced by Bismarck. The resultant of these diverse forces was a somewhat uncertain diplomatic policy. If Turkey was disintegrating, as was openly or tacitly assumed by most of these gentlemen, Bosnia was the fragment, or one of the fragments, plainly predestined to Austria-Hungary. But did the Hungarian half of the Dual Monarchy desire it? If Count Andrassy's diagnosis of the situation was correct, the answer was most doubtful. Hungary had already swallowed more Slavs than she could comfortably digest. Why add to their number? The real menace of the existing situation, to Austria, and to Europe, lay in the fact that, if war broke out between Russia and Turkey, it might end in giving Russia a controlling influence in the Balkans. This, said Count Andrassy, could never be

tolerated; and the possession of Bosnia might, from this point of view, be a weakness rather than a strength.

If doubts and anxieties prevailed in Vienna, Lord Salisbury at the end of November found the Ministers in Rome peaceful and encouraging — more encouraging at least than any others whom he had met in the course of this remarkable tour. Italy after all was not immediately concerned. No interest of hers was threatened; and she could afford to look on and help the cause of peace when help was needed.

Of the Powers which were to meet in conference there now remained only two with whose Governments the British plenipotentiary had not enjoyed long and friendly conversations. But they were the most important of all — Russia and Turkey. They had, however, supplied the background of every conversation which Lord Salisbury had held in the European capitals; their ambitions, their weaknesses, their hopes, and their fears, had been examined by experts' eyes from every angle, and probably as much was known in the Chanceries of Europe about their future course as they knew themselves — though this perhaps did not amount to very much.

What Lord Salisbury himself desired was some arrangement which would secure tolerable government for the non-Turkish subjects of Turkey in Europe without hopelessly impairing Turkey's powers of resistance to Russian ambitions in the Bosphorus, the Ægean coasts, and the Levant. He thought that

the uncontrolled expansion of Russian influence in the Near East would threaten our maritime communications with India, just as he thought that in Central Asia a similar cause would seriously weaken the security of India's northwest frontier. In the then condition of the world, therefore, he regarded buffer States, like Turkey and Afghanistan, as capable of performing a great service both for Britain and the world.

A buffer State can, however, perform its peaceful functions with complete success on only two conditions. Its own behaviour must not provoke international strife, and it must not, under the guise of independence, allow itself to become the subservient tool of other people.

The Christian Powers at Constantinople presented to the Porte a scheme drafted by Lord Salisbury by which it was hoped that both these ends might be attained. Good government for the Christian subjects of the Porte was to be obtained by one set of provisions; the military independence of the Turk was to be secured by another.

Many of the wise, basing themselves on history, could not bring themselves to believe that the Great Powers of Christendom would agree on any policy designed to reform Turkey or to maintain it. But still less did they believe that if Europe did agree, the Porte would prove recalcitrant. They were wrong. Christendom offered unanimous advice. Turkey rejected it. In January, 1877, the Congress broke up,

and war became inevitable. It broke out between Russia and Turkey in April.

The political situation in Great Britain became exceedingly difficult. The Bulgarian atrocities supplied Mr. Gladstone (the real though not the nominal leader of the Opposition) with a theme peculiarly suited to his oratorical genius. His own administrative gifts, great as they were, did not (I think) greatly shine in the sphere of foreign affairs; but as a critic in opposition he was supremely qualified to embarrass the Minister responsible for their conduct. From 1874 till March, 1878, this Minister was Lord Derby, whose great intellectual gifts gave him a clear vision of all that was to be said against any definite policy, but rarely provided him with an effective alternative. Between the Liberal statesman who was thundering in the market-place, and the Conservative statesman who was hesitating in the Council Chamber, with the Turks defeated in the Balkans, and the Russians on the way to Constantinople, the difficulties of the British Cabinet became more and more acute. Nor was the tension relaxed till Lord Derby resigned and Lord Salisbury was appointed in his place.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CONGRESS OF BERLIN

LORD SALISBURY'S acceptance of the Foreign Office marked the end of Cabinet divisions and the beginning of a vigorous and consistent handling of the international situation. From my personal point of view it marked the beginning of an official or quasi-official connection which, in one form or another, brought us close together through all the remaining years of his active life. On taking his new post, he asked me to become his Parliamentary private secretary. I accepted with alacrity. For though there were neither responsibilities nor emoluments attached to the position, it brought me into close contact with public affairs, and with those by whom public affairs were then directed. As the reader knows, my uncle had always treated me with affection, never allowing the eighteen years which separated our ages to hamper the freedom of our intercourse. But this new relationship enabled him to call on me for such political services as I was able to render; thus providing me with new fields of interest, without (I hope) adding to his own burdens.

Though my secretarial duties brought me into close touch with great events, it must be owned that they supplied little material for these reminiscences. The policy of Britain from Lord Salisbury's accession to

MR. BALFOUR IN 1878
When Private Secretary to Lord Salisbury at the Berlin Conference

the Foreign Office at the end of March, 1878, to the Treaty of Berlin in July, belong in an especial sense to general European history. Of domestic history I remember little but the monotonous fury of party controversy. Everything of importance about the diplomacy of these months, whether true or false, has been said and re-said; and even the least discreet of private secretaries could have nothing new to reveal about events which in their day wore down so many pens and overstrained so many voices.

One unexpected function, indeed, I was called upon to perform, which, though of no intrinsic interest, was due to a curious diplomatic episode which might have had serious consequences. The circumstances were these:

Turkey had lost the war when Plevna surrendered on December 10, 1877, but peace was not formally declared till the Russians, now in sight of Constantinople, compelled their vanquished enemy to accept the Treaty of San Stefano on May 30, 1878. Then arose in definite shape the peril to European peace which had been long foreseen, and for which Britain had already been prepared by calling out the reserves and bringing Indian troops to Malta (April, 1877). The Treaty gave Russia a position both in the Near East and the Middle East which, as the Government believed, menaced the security of the Indian Empire. It also involved a violation of European treaties to which all the Great Powers, including Russia, were parties. Britain protested; she insisted that the

treaty of San Stefano should be submitted to a European Congress; and after some demur this policy was accepted by all the Powers who had been parties to the Treaty of 1856. They were invited to meet at Berlin, and Bismarck consented to preside. This was much; but in Lord Salisbury's opinion it was not enough. 'To enter a Congress with the probability of retiring from it was to aggravate enormously the chances of war. The best chance of agreeing was a mutual knowledge of the points on which each side was inclined to insist or to give way.[1] With this opinion Bismarck agreed, as did Schouvaloff, the Russian Ambassador in London. This preliminary understanding was successfully reached; but the confidential memorandum embodying its provisions had scarcely been signed before a summary of its contents appeared in the 'Globe' — an evening newspaper since defunct.

This piece of treachery, imperilling as it did the success of a delicate and all-important negotiation, greatly disgusted the Foreign Secretary. For a moment he even distrusted the machinery of his own Office, though the traitor, Marvin by name, was not one of its regular members. Now, it so happened that at this very moment Lord Salisbury was engaged in another negotiation, also concerned with the British side of the Eastern Question, though in this case it was with the Turk, not the Russian, that the diplomatic conversations were being carried on. As I have

[1] *Life of Lord Salisbury*, II, 252.

already noted, the security of India is in part a problem of frontier defence, in part of maritime communications. A Russia which should absorb or dominate Turkey would threaten both; and the British Government in view of these perils were anxious to strengthen their position in the Eastern Mediterranean — at that time much weaker than it is now. They devised what Lord Beaconsfield described as a 'place of arms,' and their choice fell upon Cyprus. The arrangements by which the ownership of the island was transferred from Turkey to Britain were such as to benefit all the interests concerned — Turkish, British, and Cypriot. But they could not with advantage be discussed prematurely in public, and Lord Salisbury was resolved that no second betrayal should embarrass his diplomacy, nor any second Marvin make profit out of a breach of trust. He, therefore, ordained that the cyphering and decyphering involved in the negotiations should be carried out by his own private secretaries, all of them, except myself, clerks in the Foreign Office. My help also was required and gladly given; but I have to add that, though good-will was admittedly not lacking, I earned no praise from my colleagues either for the speed or the accuracy of my amateurish performances. Still, I can truthfully claim to have played a part, however small, in the acquisition of Cyprus — a fact which I think should find a place in these reminiscences!

The man, however, whose performance in this connection has left the most permanent mark on the

history of his country was Mr. Marvin himself. After his corrupt transaction with the 'Globe,' an attempt was made to bring him to justice. It failed; not because there was any doubt as to what he had done, but because what he had done was apparently no crime in the eyes of the law. It was generally felt that this condition of things was intolerable. The law was therefore changed, and Mr. Marvin might justly have asserted that, if not the author of an important legal reform, he had at least been its occasion.

In international politics, however, the great event of 1878 was neither the preliminary agreement with Russia nor the arrangement with Turkey about Cyprus, but the Conference and Treaty of Berlin. As I am not writing the history of Europe, but the reminiscences of an unimportant member of Lord Salisbury's staff, I would not, even if I could, add anything of weight to the volumes already devoted to these subjects. The very little that I have to say will be purely personal.

To my uncle, who carried the weight of immense responsibilities, who was overwhelmed with work and detested shows, all the festal ceremonies which hid, and sometimes hampered, the progress of great events were intolerably wearisome. I (who was very differently situated) am inclined to think that on the whole I rather liked them. To be sure, I rely on memories which for the most part are now rather dim. I appear to have written no letters; and those who have looked

through my papers can find no more significant record of my impressions than the card of invitation to a state banquet and a photograph of Lord Salisbury's staff, among whom I am, alas! the sole survivor. Could I compare notes with my old companions, I think we should agree that in our Ambassador — Lord Odo Russell [1] — and Lady Odo, we found friends who were endlessly kind to their compatriots, and that the hospitality of the German Government was admirable. We should recall the picturesque magnificence of Count Andrassy's Magyar uniform and the diplomatic eccentricities of the Russian — Prince Gortchakoff. But perhaps what we should dwell on with most interest would be the contrast between the heads of the British Mission — Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury. Never did two statesmen holding the same political creed, furthering the same foreign policy, faced day by day with the same difficulties, and in constant consultation, differ more sharply in temperament. Earlier in their official careers their relations had been stormy. But these times had passed for ever, and the more they worked together the better became their relations; though to the last they resembled each other (so far as I could see) in little except courage, patriotism, and wit.

Consider these two following extracts from hasty letters written from Berlin by Lord Salisbury to his wife. On June 14th he writes: 'Beaconsfield has given

[1] Afterwards Lord Ampthill.

Schou[1] what he calls a dusting. I don't know with what effect — he is evidently very proud of the performance.' Compare this with what Lord Salisbury says about Lord Beaconsfield a few days later, on June 23d: 'The Chief [i.e., Lord Beaconsfield] is distressing himself very much about the supposed designs of Bismarck. What with deafness, ignorance of French, and Bismarck's extraordinary mode of speech, Beaconsfield has only the dimmest idea of what is going on, understands everything cross-ways, and imagines a perpetual conspiracy.' [2]

This is hardly a flattering description of a colleague, yet I have no doubt that it was strictly true. But neither, on the other hand, do I doubt that the 'dusting' Lord Beaconsfield claims to have inflicted on Schouvaloff was a valuable diplomatic performance. We shall never know what he said. But that he succeeded in impressing on his Russian friend the inner verities of the situation, as seen from the British point of view, I do not in the least doubt. He was speaking his mother tongue, and dealing with broad general considerations. Of his mother tongue he was a master; and none knew better than he how generalities could be effectively handled.

Those of my readers who are interested in these faint and disjointed recollections of great men and great events will certainly ask whether I left Berlin

[1] That is, Schouvaloff, the Russian Ambassador in London, at this time in Berlin. See *Life of Lord Salisbury*, II, 280.

[2] *Life of Lord Salisbury*, II, 287.

with nothing to say about Prince Bismarck. It so happens that I *did* have one brief talk with the great man, though the intelligent reader will learn without surprise that it was *not* about the Eastern Question. We were introduced at Lady Odo Russell's; and he must have been in some difficulty as to the kind of thing he should say to a foreign private secretary of whom he had probably never heard before, and about whom, as yet, he knew nothing but the name. It was the name which saved us. 'Are you a descendant,' he said, 'of the Balfour of Burleigh who plays his part in Sir Walter Scott's "Old Mortality"?' It would have amused me to answer in the affirmative. The proudest pedigree would suffer by the elimination of an historic murderer whose exploit had been performed two hundred years before. And had I been descended from any Balfour of Burleigh, and had any Balfour of Burleigh murdered Archbishop Sharp, I should with due modesty have admitted the fact. As it was, I had to disclaim the honour; but in doing so I ventured to express my gratification, as a Scotsman, at the intimate acquaintance with our Scottish novelist shown by the great German. 'Ah,' said the Prince, 'when we were young we all had to read Sir Walter. *He was considered so very proper.*'

With this historic observation on the connection between art and morals, I take leave of the Congress of Berlin, and the Russo-Turkish aspects of the Eastern Question. Pan-Slavism was dead. Turkish domination in Eastern Europe was dead or dying. Russia,

when not occupied with her internal troubles, was seeking expansion elsewhere; and the fighting elements in the Balkan States found it more to their taste to fight with each other than to look for quarrels farther afield. The Berlin Congress marks the end of a period: and so far as the British Empire was concerned, Lord Beaconsfield was justified in proclaiming that it gave us 'Peace with Honour.'

CHAPTER IX

DISRAELI'S LAST GOVERNMENT

THE Treaty of Berlin was signed on July 13, 1878, and Lord Beaconsfield remained in office till April, 1880. But as I shall have nothing more to say about his Government in their collective capacity, I think this may be the most convenient place to insert a memorandum of a talk I had with my uncle at Hatfield shortly after Mr. Gladstone took office. I have no recollection of this incident which occurred nearly half a century ago. But the document explains itself; it is in my own handwriting, and with the exception of one word, which might give pain even at this distance of time, I give it exactly in the shape in which it was found among my papers. The 'Lord Chancellor' referred to was, of course, not the new Lord Chancellor of Mr. Gladstone's Government, but the Conservative Lord Chancellor, Lord Cairns, who had resigned with the rest of his colleagues at the end of April.

HATFIELD, *May* 8, 1880

Discussed with Lord S. advisability of writing some account of the late Government, especially in relation to secret history of their foreign policy. He again repeated (what I before knew) that the part played by Dizzy was entirely misunderstood out of doors.

As a politician he was exceedingly short-sighted though very clear-sighted. He neither could, nor would, look far ahead, or attempt to balance remote possibilities; though he rapidly detected the difficulties of the immediate situation, and found the easiest, if not the best, solution for them.

As the head of a Cabinet his fault was want of firmness. The chiefs of departments got their own way too much. The Cabinet as a whole got it too little, and this necessarily followed from having at the head of affairs a statesman whose only final political principle was that the Party must on no account be broken up, and who shrank therefore from exercising coercion on any of his subordinates. Thus it became possible that the Transvaal should be annexed — not indeed against the wish of the Cabinet but — actually without its knowledge. Lord Carnarvon wished to do it. Lord Beaconsfield was persuaded that it was an excellent thing to do: i.e., the responsible head of the Department told him, and he believed, that it was an excellent thing to do, and it was done.

Again — Bartle Frere should have been recalled as soon as the views of his ultimatum reached England. We should then have escaped in appearance, as well as in reality, the responsibility of the Zulu War. So thought the majority of the Cabinet, so thought Dizzy himself. But the Queen was strongly opposed to it; and Hicks-Beach was strongly opposed to it; and the Prime Minister was unable to resist

his Sovereign and the Colonial Secretary together. Again, it was decided in Cabinet that the invasion of Afghanistan should take place only through one Pass. Lytton objected. Because Lytton did, Hardy[1] did. Because Hardy did, Dizzy did: — for was not Hardy at the head of the India Office? — And so the plans were altered.

The Eastern policy of the Government suffered much through having at the head of affairs a man who with all his great qualities was unable to decide a general principle of action, or to ensure that when decided on it should be carried out by his subordinates. When Lord S. was going to Constantinople for the Conference he constantly urged upon his colleagues that it was little use his going unless it was previously decided exactly what should be done in the event of the Turks refusing the proposition of the Powers. 'Oh, but they won't refuse,' was the only answer he could ever get; and with that he had to be content. At a later period a clear line of action should have been decided on, respecting the Russian advances on Constantinople. It might have been possible (though probably not expedient) to stop them at the Danube. With the help of Austria it might have been possible *and* expedient to stop them at the Balkans. Dizzy's natural policy would probably have been the first. But with a man like him at the head of affairs who *could* not look far ahead, and with a man like Derby who *would* not look far ahead, we naturally drifted.

[1] Gathorne Hardy, first Earl of Cranbrook. (*Editor's note.*)

Lord Derby, indeed, would never have consented to fixing on any determinate line of policy which would, or might, end in serious and decided action; and Dizzy shrunk to the last from insisting on anything to which Lord Derby would have refused his consent.

Why Lord Derby resigned is obvious enough. Why he did not do so long before is the only problem which requires solution; I suppose it was too great an effort even to form a decision which would for ever relieve him from the necessity of deciding anything again. The scene in Cabinet towards the end of his official connection with it must have been highly curious. The issues of peace and war trembling in the balance; Lord Derby, between overwork, and responsibility, in a condition of utter moral prostration, doing as little as was possible, and doing that little under compulsion. As the Lord Chancellor told me the other day, 'During his last year (I think he said) of Office, all that Derby did was done at the point of the bayonet.' I believe during that period, the Chancellor wrote many of the critical despatches for him, and, so to speak, put the pen in his hand and made him sign!

Why Lord Carnarvon resigned is more difficult to say. Lord S. told me that he could never get any reasonable account of his action out of Lord C. His conduct was probably largely due to personal motives. The fact that the names of Lord C. and Lord D. were so constantly associated together when they

left the Government, is entertaining, from the circumstance that they were the two members of the Cabinet who got on least well together. At one time (as the Lord Chancellor told me) Lord C. used to complain bitterly that Lord D. was using every means of thwarting his policy and undermining his influence.

CHAPTER X

MY BURIAL BILL

DURING the period which separated the Treaty of Berlin (July, 1878) from the fall of Lord Beaconsfield's Government in April, 1880, my personal activities had no special connection with great affairs. In the House of Commons I voted and sometimes spoke. In the Foreign Office and at Hatfield, I did such secretarial work as came my way. But from a personal point of view the most important event was the publication of my first book, 'A Defence of Philosophic Doubt,' in 1879. For reasons given elsewhere, of which the ordinary reader will certainly approve, I reserve such episodes as this (and there are more of the same sort to come!) for separate treatment and a narrower audience. Politics for the moment are my theme; and in the field of politics the only incident worth recording during these months was my first attempt at legislative reform. The subject was the English Churchyard!

For historic reasons there was one aspect of the English laws relating to burial which gave rise to ecclesiastical quarrels unknown in Ireland or Scotland, where ecclesiastical quarrels have so often shown themselves in their most embittered form. By the laws of nature all men must die; and by the laws of England when they die their bodies must be

buried. This meant that in many places the burial must take place in the parish churchyard, and as this belonged to the Church, and was controlled by the parson, it might happen, and sometimes did happen, that the Burial Service was of a kind to which the deceased, when alive, had professed the strongest objection, and to which his relations had the strongest objection at the time of his death — an obvious occasion of scandal. I conceived a plan by which, as I thought, scandal could be avoided without materially injuring the proprietary rights of the Church. The scheme did not greatly please those Nonconformists whose object in attacking the Burial Laws was not so much to remove a rare and diminishing grievance connected with ecclesiastical ownership of parish churchyards as to turn all the ancient endowments of the English Church to secular uses. For them the misuse of these endowments was a valuable asset; and politically speaking, my Bill, had it passed, would therefore have been inconvenient. Though conceived in their interests, they looked at it coldly. But its embittered opponents were not they, but the Church Party, led in this case by my Uncle Beresford Hope, Member for Cambridge University. He remonstrated with me for bringing it in, explaining his reasons to me in private at some length and with a friendly warmth. He thought, rightly enough, that the political Nonconformists were engaged in a general attack on Church endowments, and, in his view, the general attack should be met by a general defence.

He had not the least desire to have prayers read over any man's body after death to which the man would have objected had he been alive. But to make concessions anywhere was, in his opinion, to weaken the defences everywhere. Nothing should be freely given, lest all should be forcibly taken away.

I was little moved by this theory of political dynamics, but I recognized that it would appeal to many of my friends. I therefore felt bound to let Lord Salisbury know what I was doing lest it should occur to some busybody to make the Chief responsible for the legislative experiments of the secretary. I sent him the Bill as drafted by my friend — Lord Francis Hervey — then Member for Bury Saint Edmonds, famous in my Eton days as the only Oppidan who had ever won the Newcastle. Lord Salisbury replied in a letter containing some interesting comments and reminiscences. It ran as follows:

20 Arlington Street, S. W.
March 19, 1878

My dear Arthur,

A very good Bill — if men's minds were in a temper to take good Bills. I used, in my hot youth, to spend time in devising similarly perfect schemes for the settlement of the Church Rate controversy. Hubbard and I used steadily to introduce Bills which steadily came to nothing. May yours have a more auspicious ending!

But, if you bring it in, you will probably find your-

selves pretty well protected from the curse which attaches to those of whom all men speak well.

Ever yours affect.

SALISBURY

My Bill duly came on for Second Reading at the morning sitting of February 19th, and by six o'clock was extinguished for the session by the process of 'talking out.' In those days there was no closure, and Parliamentarians, much less expert than Mr. Beresford Hope, could stop the progress of any private Member's legislation of which they disapproved. In this case he organized the whole plan of campaign, and in his own person contributed no less than fourteen columns of Hansard to its successful execution. Thus approved by one uncle, then talked out by another, my first humble attempt to improve my country's laws was quietly destroyed! The Division, had it taken place, might have had some momentary interest.

But it could only have been momentary. In little more than a year came the Dissolution of April, 1880, the resignation of Lord Beaconsfield, five years of Opposition, some new questions, some new men — and incidentally a final settlement of the Burials controversy.

CHAPTER XI

MR. GLADSTONE IN POWER

HERTFORD was a quiet country town, foredoomed to extinction as a separate political entity whenever the next redistribution of seats should take place, and in the mean while little exposed to the more violent gusts and currents of party passion. I had not, however, long taken up my quarters at the 'Salisbury Arms' (where I resided during the election) before becoming aware that the Hertford of 1880 was politically a very different place from the Hertford of 1874. There was now no question of a 'walk-over.' I had an opponent, and an opponent who meant business — Mr. Bowen, a Harrow Master, brother of the well-known judge, an academic Liberal, able and energetic. I doubt whether, with all his merits, he was a very good candidate. According to the reports which reached me, he was neither fascinating as a canvasser nor formidable as an orator. But, at least in the latter capacity, he brought with him a very effective ally. Mr. —— was, I believe, a 'University extension' lecturer, which I should not have supposed a good school of popular oratory. But whatever he may have been in the lecture-room, he was by all accounts most excellent on the platform. He specialized in Bulgarian atrocities, he deeply stirred the sensibilities of his audience; and like his

great model, found in the brutalities of which the Turkish irregulars had been guilty in 1876, conclusive reasons why his hearers should vote against Lord Beaconsfield in 1880.

He persuaded many to agree with him. The struggle was severe, and I was more than satisfied when, aided by the organizing capacity of Sir Charles Longmore, I was returned by a majority of 164 as Member — it so happens the last Member — for the ancient borough of Hertford. I owe it much.

At this moment Lord Salisbury, precluded by the Parliamentary practice of that day from taking any part in a House of Commons election, was seeking much-needed rest at Biarritz. During his absence he placed Hatfield at Lord Beaconsfield's disposal, and there, in enforced repose, the Prime Minister watched the rising tide of Gladstonian Liberalism overwhelm his Government and his party. Doubtless the rumours pouring in from all parts of the country had already begun to show that the sanguine forecasts of the party organizers were not likely to be fulfilled. From Hertford, only five miles away, he must certainly have heard that there the battle was furious, and the issue doubtful. He was much perturbed; for though Hertford in point of population was unimportant, it was not unimportant as a test case. The seat had long been held by the Conservative Party; at the last election it had been uncontested, and if it should prove faithless now, where was fidelity to be looked for? Moreover, the polling day for the bor-

ough came early in the election, and was it not a doctrine accepted by all political prophets, that constituencies were like sheep, prepared to follow the member of the flock which ran first?

In addition therefore, to motives depending on personal regard for my uncle or myself, Lord Beaconsfield had good reason to watch with anxious interest the course of the Hertford election. He received with peculiar relief the news of my success, and met me at Hatfield with the warmest congratulations. I recall him standing at the north door of the house looking down the avenue — a strange, almost a picturesque figure, dignified and calm, though not, I thought, unmoved. We interchanged electoral news, little of it good; and I hurried off without unnecessary delay to another field of activity, where as it happened, I was in demand. The centre of electoral interest at the moment was Midlothian, where Lord Dalkeith was engaged in a gallant but hopeless struggle with Mr. Gladstone, and was in urgent need of all the help he could obtain. It is true that the mere number of his fellow workers could make little difference in the result. No shoal of minnows, however numerous, could lash the surface of the political ocean into foam in rivalry with this particular Whale. But we — the minnows — had to do our best; and as I was a Scotsman, as I belonged to the Lothians, as I had recently spoken in Edinburgh,[1] and (best of all) as I was a

[1] On the 12th of December, 1879. The speech was published by Blackwood.

successful Conservative candidate when successful Conservative candidates were few, my help was warmly welcomed. I need scarcely add that it was quite ineffectual.

In those days the results of a general election might be substantially known some time before the remoter constituencies had actually polled. So it was in 1880. It soon became clear, not only that the Conservatives would be beaten, but that the Liberals would have a large majority over Conservatives and Home Rulers together. In these circumstances, Lord Beaconsfield would obviously have to leave office; but it was still a question to be decided whether the Government should resign before Parliament met, or wait till they were turned out by an adverse vote of the House of Commons. Lord Beaconsfield's views on this subject were clearly expressed in a long conversation I had with him on April 8th, the purport of which I duly conveyed to my uncle, who was still at Biarritz.

The letter, which is of interest quite apart from the particular problem dealt with, runs as follows:

April 8, 1880

My dear Uncle Robert,

I have just had a long conversation with Dizzy, of which this is the substance.

There is to be a Cabinet on Tuesday (13th) to determine on the course which should be pursued with reference to the resignation of the Ministry. In an-

swer to a question of mine, he said that he could not fix a later day; partly because the public expected some immediate action, partly because he had to see the Queen on the 18th, by which time it would be necessary to have a plan of some sort resolved on — a result which it might take more than one meeting of the Cabinet to achieve.

He is extremely anxious that you should be present. 'He would not,' he said, 'take the responsibility of asking you to come if it would be injurious to your health to do so.' But this is plainly the only responsibility in the matter from which he is inclined to shrink.

His own view, no doubt, is that the Ministry should resign before the meeting of Parliament. Had the Liberals only been in a majority by the help of the Home Rulers, it would have been 'madness' not to compel the other side to show their true position at the very beginning of the Session. It is, however, now evident that the Liberals will have a large majority quite independent of the Home Rulers. What then would be gained by having a 'confidence' debate? Should we succeed in converting public opinion by means of a Parliamentary discussion?

Such an opinion, says Dizzy, is all 'damned nonsense.' The beaten party is always thought to have the worst of the argument. While, therefore, nothing would be gained by a debate, a great deal would be lost. The debate in both Houses must be followed by a Division. The Division in the Lords would show a

majority of 100 in favour of the Government. The Division of the Commons would show an equal majority against the Government, and we should therefore begin the new régime with a conflict between the two Houses in which the House of Lords would have ignominiously to give way. The House of Lords would 'ask to be kicked.'

Dizzy, then, by a natural transition, began to discuss the future policy of the party. He did not take a despairing view of our case, though he said we should never return to power in his time. Much would depend (he thought) on the management of the House of Lords. On the one hand, we must not allow our majority there to be discouraged. On the other hand, no conflict must be permitted between the two Houses unless something substantial is to be gained thereby.

Next year the Liberals will bring in a Bill to equalize the county and borough franchise. If this is accompanied with a measure for the redistribution of seats, their difficulties will be almost insuperable. If it is not combined with any such measure, the House of Lords may decline to pass it until the two questions are dealt with simultaneously. The old method of coercing the House of Lords is no longer practicable. Formerly, in case of a difference between the Houses the Radicals used to dissolve, 'now they will be in such a damned fright of being turned out that they will never dare to do it.' More especially will this be the case if the subject of controversy be the redistribution of seats—a question in which the small

boroughs must necessarily be averse to any change.

For his part (he said) he would not desert a sinking ship; though for himself what he would desire would be to make his bow and return to his favourite pursuits (whatever they may be) and reside for the first time during the spring and summer months at his country place! To continue an active part in politics would involve a great sacrifice on his part — but the sacrifice he was prepared to make for the sake of the Party.

The old man seemed very well and extraordinarily communicative. There was nothing of the fallen statesman about him as he marched up and down his room in Downing Street, pouring out these, and other remarks.

I have now told you, I think, most of what I remember, and a good deal more, I daresay, than you can read.

Yours affect.

A. J. B.

Lord Beaconsfield's arguments were unanswerable; and on April 21st he resigned.

The magnitude of the electoral disaster was, I believe, a matter of surprise to the coolest heads in the Conservative Party. In a letter to me from Biarritz Lord Salisbury writes on April 10th: 'The hurricane that has swept us away is so strange and new a phenomenon that we shall not for some time understand its real meaning. I doubt if so much enthusiasm and

such a general unity of action proceeds from any sentimental opinion, or from a mere academic judgment. It seems to me to be inspired by some definite desire for change; and means business. It may disappear as rapidly as it came, or it may be the beginning of a serious war of classes. Gladstone is doing all he can to give it the latter meaning.'

These were first thoughts, and as such are very interesting. But I do not recollect my uncle ever repeating them as his considered judgment; nor do I think that those most actively engaged in the contest would have accepted them as they stand. Yet if this explanation be rejected, what better explanation can be found? Are we to be content with the 'swing of the pendulum'? If, as I suppose, the swing of the pendulum is a name for the complex causes which normally make for electoral change, it seems hardly sufficient. No doubt they were in full operation. Those whose business it was to criticize had then, as ever, an easier task than those who had to act and defend their actions. Then, as ever, promises which related to an unknown future made a better show than performances which already belong to a misrepresented past. But though these familiar forces added strength to the 'hurricane' (as Lord Salisbury called it) of March, 1880, I agree with his letter of April in thinking them an insufficient explanation of its fury. This I find in *personality* — in the personality of one man, of Mr. Gladstone.

Even before the Eastern crisis he had often exer-

cised an individual influence in the country greater, I believe, than any of his Parliamentary predecessors except William Pitt. Bagehot narrates that 'a bad speaker is said to have been asked how he got on as a candidate.' 'Oh,' he answered, 'when I do not know what to say, I say, "Gladstone," and then they are sure to cheer and I have time to think.' When Bagehot wrote these words,[1] Mr. Gladstone was far from being in as favourable a position to head a great agitation as he became in 1876. He was, to be sure, a powerful Minister leading a great party; but powerful Ministers are hampered by heavy responsibilities, and great parties involve complicated entanglements. From all these trammels Mr. Gladstone had at one stroke cut himself free when he announced his retirement into private life. At the zenith of his physical powers, with all the authority of an 'elder statesman,' all the independence of a simple citizen, all the gifts of an accomplished agitator, he chose a cause which, as treated by him, was exactly fitted to display his marvellous powers, and appealed to his particular prejudices. The atrocities on which he dwelt were, broadly speaking, only too real, the indignation which he expressed was genuine. He expressed it to audiences, who knew little about the East, with immense emotional power, unqualified vehemence, and untiring iteration. Furthermore, he hated the Prime Minister.

[1] See Bagehot's own Introduction to the second edition of his *English Constitution*, dated June, 1872. (*Editor's note.*)

How was an assault so conducted to be met? Holding my views I could see little difficulty in providing an adequate defence on broad lines for the policy of the Government, and an easy refutation of specific charges. But who was to get it into people's heads? Only Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury possessed the requisite knowledge, and carried the requisite authority. But even had they fully seen the need, they could hardly have applied the remedy in sufficient quantity. Lord Beaconsfield was too old and too frail; Lord Salisbury was too busy and too tired. Moreover, once the electoral writs were issued, the lips of both were sealed. Peers, by the rules which then prevailed, were not permitted to take part in elections.

As a commentary on these observations, I quote the following note written by my uncle twelve days after the dissolution of Parliament:

20 Arlington Street
March 18, 1880

My dear Arthur,

I have dictated one or two notes which occurred to me on reading Gladstone's speech. They are very obvious, but I send them to remind, in case the points slipped from notice.

I should think a good deal might be made of (1) Russia as the champion of Sclavonic freedom; (2) of the libel on the two Ambassadors, as showing the ultra-distortion of perception which Gladstone's

mind has suffered through the operation of party rancour. Whether it is worth while insisting on Austria's having been the secular ally of England, you will be able to judge.

Is it not time to dissipate the absurd assumption that the present Cabinet is responsible for all that Derby said or did, or left undone? Of course we cannot, in view of the constitutional fiction, repudiate the responsibility ourselves; but no such hindrance need affect others.

Ever yours affect.

SALISBURY

I am sure that I did my best to carry out this recommendation, and possibly some notice of my efforts may have appeared in the local newspapers. But of what use was that? How would the loudest protest I could make penetrate through the din of a general election? Yet the subject was important, and my uncle must have written to me because there was no one better to write to; — surely a melancholy commentary on the imperfection of the Conservative machinery for propaganda and the overwhelming advantage obtained by Mr. Gladstone through his choice of the battlefield, his unique powers of popular appeal, his Parliamentary fame, and his untiring energy. He *was* the Opposition. It was he who scattered Disraeli's majority; and he did it unaided.

Inevitably his success made him Prime Minister; but no less inevitably it wholly changed the tactical

position of the combatants. The offensive must usually rest with the Opposition, the defensive with the Government. Who, then, in May, 1880, was going to lead this Conservative counter-attack? Who was going to restore the confidence of the defeated party and hasten the days of the hoped-for reaction?

CHAPTER XII

THE FOURTH PARTY

BEFORE DISRAELI'S DEATH [1]

UNDER our party system, a general election which brings about the fall of a Government may not only modify national policy, but will certainly change the functions of the great majority of individual Members of Parliament. With regard to Ministers and ex-Ministers this is plain enough. They invert their rôles when they exchange their Benches. Those who formerly criticized have now to administer. Those who formerly administered are now expected to criticize. An analogous transformation occurs among their unofficial supporters. The most

[1] The sub-titles of this and the following chapters were not in the original draft. They have been inserted by the Editor on the strength of a conversation with Lord Balfour, recorded on November 9, 1928. He then said:

'I'll tell you how I am going to write the Fourth Party chapter. Nobody seems to have quite brought out the interesting points in that episode.

'It falls into two parts — before, and after, Dizzy's death. Before Dizzy's death, we were four men who had no personal ambitions beyond the ordinary ones of wanting to get on, and make our mark in Parliament. It was quite easy to work together. . . .

'But as soon as the question of party leadership became a practical one, a second phase set in. Randolph himself realised what my attitude would be, and never expected me to act differently from the way I did.' (*Editor's note.*)

obvious duty (I do not say the only duty) of any individual Member of a Parliamentary majority is, speaking generally, to assist Government business, to defend Government action, and in particular to be found in the Government lobby whenever the House divides. He may further these ends by his eloquence. He may do so, even more effectually, perhaps, by his silence. But he can rarely give free play to his personal idiosyncrasies without considering the effect of his action on the general position of the Administration which he was returned to support.

Very different are the functions of the independent Members of the Opposition. When in the hour of their defeat, they moved from Mr. Speaker's right hand to his left, they lost greatly in collective power, but they gained in individual freedom. Party discipline is looser; personal initiative finds more openings; and the art of attack offers to the ingenious Parliamentarian a greater scope and variety of method than the counter-art of defence. In short, from the point of view of the unofficial Members, it is more amusing to criticize than to praise, to expose the blunders of your opponents than the merits of your friends; so at least it seemed to me in the year 1880.

If Parliamentary Opposition, conceived in this general fashion, was not without its charms, the special circumstances of the Parliamentary Opposition after Lord Beaconsfield's defeat gave particular zest to any share which I was able to take in its proceed-

ings. It was then that the Fourth Party came into being, talked much, and was much talked of; practised all the virtues and some, perhaps, of the vices characteristic of Opposition; was doubtfully praised by its friends, and heartily abused by its opponents; played a part in the Parliamentary struggle of which neither the number of its members nor their Parliamentary position gave the least promise. This singular development was due to no act of deliberate creation; it was bound by no formal constitution; it possessed no distinctive creed; its very name was an accident of debate; it consisted, at its gayest and its best, of no more than four friends, who sat together in the House, supported each other in difficulties, consulted freely on points of tactics, and made it their business to convince the Government that large majorities did not adequately cover a multitude of sins.

Of the four associates, the two senior, though they had never held political office, were men of acknowledged position in public life. The oldest Parliamentarian among us, Sir John Gorst as he afterwards became, was a good mathematician, a good lawyer, and an experienced organizer. In this last capacity, so I always understood, he had before my time done work for the party, which (as I suspect) had in his opinion been inadequately recognized. He was an acute and ready debater, of more force than charm, but clear and incisive if somewhat cynical. He certainly never left his hearers in doubt as to what he meant, or why

he meant it. He was often unanswerable, but not so often persuasive.

To him, Sir Henry Drummond Wolff presented in some respects a singular contrast. A diplomat by profession, a man of the world by temperament and training, with a great aptitude for amusing and being amused, playing the game of life with gusto, and finding an interlude of Opposition politics, spent in congenial company, an occupation very much to his taste. Without being a great speaker, he had a quick eye for the possibilities of a Parliamentary situation and a tongue ready enough to turn opportunities to account. It was he whose readiness of resource started the long series of 'Bradlaugh' debates, which sometimes amused and sometimes disgusted the public in every session of the 1880 Parliament, but always embarrassed the Government. He was excellent company; and when, after his defeat at Portsmouth in the election of 1885, he deserted politics, the lighter side of the House of Commons life suffered a severe loss. His conversation, even when not strictly edifying, never failed to amuse; and there was something irresistible in his own enjoyment of his own jests — his very spectacles joining in the laugh with a sympathetic glitter.

The difference of age between the two elder and the two younger members of the Fourth Party was considerable. Whatever experience could do in the way of maturing the political aptitudes of Gorst and Wolff was already done. They were made men; at the open-

ing of the session in May, 1880, Lord Randolph Churchill and I were still more or less in the making. In my case the process seems to have been slow.

Lucy, in his 'Diary of Two Parliaments,' writes about the first three months of the Parliament of 1880: 'The member for Hertford... is not a good speaker, but he is endowed with the rich gift of conveying the impression that presently he will be a successful Parliamentary debater, and that in the mean time it is well that he should practise.'

Lord Randolph's biographer states:[1] 'Mr. Balfour (1882), speaking with altogether unexpected power, denounced the Kilmainham Treaty as "an infamy." This was the first speech he ever made that commanded general attention, or gave any promise of his future distinction.'

I know not the origin of this tradition, but am quite ready to accept it. On the particular occasion of the Kilmainham debate, I was exceedingly indignant, and this may have improved my oratory. But what doubtless improved it still more was the debating practice I had enjoyed during two years of vigorous Opposition.

Randolph's meteoric development was a very much speedier affair. In regard to external circumstances there was, indeed, little to choose between our antecedents. He was seven months my junior. We must have gone to Eton about the same time and left it at about the same age. He went for a brief space to a

[1] *Life of Lord Randolph Churchill*, 1, 211.

tutor, but otherwise we went straight from school to University — he to Oxford, and I to Cambridge. We neither of us took very brilliant degrees. We both stood for Parliament at the first general election that occurred after we came of age; we were both aided in our candidature by traditional family influences; we were both returned. In the Parliament of 1874–80 neither of us took much part, but both obtained some insight into public affairs — Lord Randolph doing secretarial work for his father, the Duke of Marlborough, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, I for my uncle, Lord Salisbury, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

These similarities of opportunity left many divergencies of taste. Randolph loved horses and hounds; he raced when he had the chance, and hated active games. I loved games, while horses and hounds left me indifferent or worse. Music meant nothing to him, pictures not much; and though we were both addicted to reading, only two memories emerge out of the dimness of those distant days which had about them any literary flavour. The first is of Randolph coming into the House of Commons at Question time on a Monday afternoon in the year 1883, and telling me that he had just returned from Eton, where he found the whole scholastic world, old and young, masters and boys, entirely absorbed in the enjoyment of a novel of adventure called 'Treasure Island' and written by one Stevenson. He advised me to procure a copy without delay. I asked him who Stevenson was, and though

on that point I got no satisfaction, I took his advice on the practical question, and so made my first acquaintance with the writings of R. L. S.

My second literary memory, though not clearly attached to any time or place, was of later date and more pathetic interest. It was the application by Randolph to his own past of Dryden's splendid lines: [1]

> Happy the man, and happy he alone,
> He, who can call to-day his own:
> He who, secure within, can say,
> To-morrow do thy worst, for I have lived to-day.
> Be fair, or foul, or rain, or shine,
> The joys I have possessed, in spite of fate, are mine.
> Not Heaven itself upon the past has power:
> But what has been, has been, and I have had my hour.

This may be a philosophy fitted for lengthening shadows and declining suns; but, whatever its value, none will deny that Lord Randolph 'had his hour' — an hour singularly brilliant, and in some respects unique. Our Parliamentary history shows, indeed, nothing like it. His career has been compared to that of Pitt, but beyond the rapidity of their rise to power, there is little resemblance between them. Pitt is

[1] Dryden's lines are the motto placed at the head of the sixteenth chapter of Mr. Winston Churchill's *Lord Randolph Churchill*. I noted their appearance there with deep interest. He tells us that they were copied out by Lord Randolph about 1891. I am fairly confident that the date at which Lord Randolph recited them to me was a good deal earlier; which confirms a feeling, which I think his biographer shares, that they expressed one aspect at least of Lord Randolph's philosophy of life.

famous for what he did in Office; Lord Randolph for what he did in Opposition. Pitt's long tenure of power enabled him to display his political genius in times of peace and in times of war, in times of national reconstruction and in times of national peril. No such problems came Lord Randolph's way; and it must for ever be a matter of conjecture how he would have dealt with them had he been given the opportunity.

Nevertheless, though no Pitt, in Dryden's phrase he 'had his hour,' and no figure in our Parliamentary history has raised himself so quickly to a position of great personal first-class political influence by the arts of Opposition alone. In the beginning of May, 1880, he was an unconsidered unit in a defeated minority; long before the end of August, he was the central figure in our small group of four, whose action might be derided, but could no longer be ignored; and this was only the beginning.

In the interests of historic truth it must here be added that Lord Randolph could never have accomplished all he did, at the rate he did it, without the aid of one most powerful ally. There would surely never have been a Churchill had there not also been a Northcote. I observed, at the beginning of this section, that one result of a great electoral reverse is to invert the functions of most Members of Parliament and in particular of the occupants of the two Front Benches. This is too obvious a truth to find a place in books on the Constitution, but in prac-

tice it has, or may have, most unexpected consequences. When Mr. Disraeli first led the House of Commons in the Conservative Government of 1867, his Front Bench contained no fewer than four first-class debaters — Mr. Disraeli himself, Lord Cranborne, Sir Hugh Cairns, and Mr. Gathorne-Hardy. When, thirteen years later, he resigned office for the last time, all these statesmen were alive and in office, but none of them was in the House of Commons, and neither Lord Beaconsfield, nor Lord Salisbury, nor Lord Cairns, nor Lord Cranborne, had left behind them any Front Bench speakers of their own calibre. Thus it came about that the Conservative Party was led by Sir Stafford Northcote, a scholar and a gentleman, a man of wide experience and urbane manners, but when it came to a fight, no more a match for Mr. Gladstone than a wooden three-decker would be for a Dreadnought.

In this case the interchange of functions consequent on the change of Government was disastrous to the Conservative Party. Sir Stafford Northcote, Sir Richard Cross, Mr. W. H. Smith, were excellent heads of great departments and able Cabinet Ministers. But when the Cabinet ceased to exist, and the great departments fell to their opponents, they were transferred through no fault of their own from duties which they performed with credit, to duties which they really could not perform at all.

This is a constitutional inconvenience of a kind unnoticed so far as I know by theoretical writers, and

for which our familiar constitutional practice provides no smooth and easy remedy. We habitually assume that any one who is competent to debate must be competent to administer, and any one who is competent to administer must debate; and we assume it, though the examples of John Bright and W. H. Smith stare us in the face. It is true that we do not expect all the leading Members of any Front Bench to be orators, nor is it necessary. But it is certainly desirable that among those who have occupied the major offices, there should be a sufficiency of effective speakers to uphold in Opposition the credit of the party. That Lord Beaconsfield would have been the first to admit the truth of this doctrine is shown by his amusing conversation with Wolff, in which he explains [1] that, had he not been firmly convinced that Mr. Gladstone's resolve to abandon politics for theology was irrevocable, he himself would have stayed in the House of Commons.

Whoever was to blame for our position, the mischief was done; and nothing short of a change of Government could put the matter right. The resulting situation, as I saw it, is described in the following letter to Lord Salisbury (who was then abroad), which I may with advantage preface with an extract from Mr. Winston Churchill's 'Lord Randolph Churchill': [2]

'But by the time the recess drew near, disagreements were rife. The Fourth Party decided openly

[1] *Life of Lord Randolph Churchill*, I, 157.

[2] *Life of Lord Randolph Churchill*, I, 148.

to condemn the want of energy and foresight which marked the leadership of the Opposition. The opportunity presented itself at a party meeting held in the Carlton Club on August 20th. The plan was drawn up by the four colleagues in convivial conclave at the Garrick Club. It was arranged that Mr. Balfour should, in the name of his colleagues, indicate the failure of Sir Stafford Northcote to lead the party in the House of Commons to the satisfaction of its more active adherents. In pursuance of this, Mr. Balfour made a very clever speech, in which he contrived to deliver a most damaging criticism of Sir Stafford Northcote's methods without actually mentioning his name or using any discourteous phrase. He obtained a considerable measure of assent from the meeting.'

A few days after this I wrote as follows:

CARLTON CLUB
Wed., Aug. 25, 1880

My dear Uncle Robert,

We are now beginning the end of the Session — which has proved satisfactory, I think, to no one concerned. The Government have certainly lost ground — but we can hardly be said to have gained it. The condition of the party is even more unsatisfactory than it was when you were here. We are trampled on by the Government, and we make no sign. We have no organization. We have no leader — or rather our leader is (and, what is worse, is very commonly

thought to be) a source of weakness, rather than of strength. Things got to such a pass last week that in order to prevent worse happening (by which I mean an attack on N. in the House), I agreed to speak our grievances at a meeting of the party which Northcote held here last Thursday. I never disliked doing anything more — partly because it is not agreeable telling a man wherein one thinks he fails in his duty — chiefly because if the thing was to be done at all, it had better have been done by an older and a more important member of the party. However, as nobody else was to be found, I undertook the business, after consulting with Smith, Sandon, B. Hope, and Sir W. B.[1] The substance of our complaint is not that Northcote is a great deal away from the House, but that when he is there, his object seems to be to discredit the actions of the independent Members, however legitimate their action may be. It is entirely owing to this behaviour that the absurd charge of obstruction has obtained the small measure of credit which it may be said to possess. It is chiefly owing to this that the Government have never had fairly brought home to them that they force important Bills through, at a time of year when useful criticism is impossible. I brought forward a motion myself on the subject on Friday last — and it will give you some idea of Northcote's notions of leading an Opposition if I tell you that when I went to him on the preceding

[1] Mr. W. H. Smith, Lord Sandon, Mr. Beresford-Hope, and Sir Walter Bartlett. (*Editor's note.*)

Tuesday to ask him if it would be convenient for him to be there and support me, he told me that he should probably be absent, and if here he should probably take up his parable against me!

The meeting on Thursday (at which, besides my own more direct criticism, the state of the party was commented on by B.,[1] B. Hope, and Percy) caused him, I think, to modify his action in this matter; but it seems amazing that he should ever have contemplated any other course of procedure than that which he ultimately pursued. Dizzy, with whom I have had some conversation, tells me that Northcote complains that the independent Members never consult him. In so far as this is true, it arises from the fact that nobody has any confidence as to the motives which may prompt his advice. He appears to have a real dislike to doing anything which may annoy the Opposition, or which may modify the very excellent opinion which they now entertain about him; and it is the suspicion that this, rather than a far-seeing caution, is the real reason why he counsels inaction, which prevents him from obtaining the confidences of those who do not happen to share his peculiar views on these subjects. I have now grumbled enough about poor Northcote — who after all is a man of many virtues. Before finishing this scrawl, let me ask you whether you want a F. Affairs debate. Cross says you do not. Let me know the state of the case. Dilke is ill, and Gladstone is ill, but I think we ought, never-

[1] Probably Sir Walter Bartlett. (*Editor's note.*)

theless, to try and get some information from the Government about their proceedings, if only to emphasize the fact that we have been kept quite in the dark. I have given up the idea of going to Germany after the Session — it is too late.

Yours affect.

A. J. B.

P.S. It would be an advantage if you could telegraph about the Foreign Affairs debate.

It must be admitted that the relations between the Conservative Leader in the Commons, and his 'independent followers' as described in this letter, were far from satisfactory, and they evidently caused some slight anxiety to Lord Beaconsfield. The session ended on September 7th, and both Gorst and Wolff had conversations with him in the course of the recess.[1] The accounts they give are very characteristic, and also very amusing. The following extract is perhaps the gem of the collection:

'I fully appreciate (said Lord Beaconsfield to Drummond Wolff) your feeling and those of your friends; but you must stick to Northcote. He represents the respectability of the party. I wholly sympathize with you all, because I never was respectable myself. In my time the respectability of the party was represented by . . . ——, a horrid man; but I had to do as well as I could; you must do the same. Don't on any account break with Northcote; but defer to

[1] See *Life of Lord Randolph Churchill*, I, 154.

him as often as you can. Whenever it becomes too difficult, you can come to me and I will try to arrange matters. Meanwhile I will speak to him.'

There was, so far as I remember, no breach with Northcote after this, certainly not during the few remaining months of Lord Beaconsfield's lifetime. But our most striking attempt, if not to acquire 'respectability,' at least to advertise our importance, had no connection with the Conservative Leader in the House of Commons. It was to Lord Salisbury that we appealed, and I naturally became the ambassador.

AUCHNASHELLACH
ROSS-SHIRE
September 29, 1880

My dear Uncle Robert,

I enclose a letter from R. Churchill requesting me to ask you to make a speech to his constituents on the occasion of your visit to Blenheim. The proposal strikes me as a cool one; and if you do not feel inclined to accede to it, you have only to let me know, and I will get you off in a manner that will cause no further awkwardness. It is possible that you may wish to deliver yourself on things in general during the autumn, and if so perhaps this would be as convenient an opportunity as any other. Public meetings in great towns have attendant horrors in the way of subsidiary luncheons and dinners, which are fatal to one's temper at the moment, and to one's digestion afterwards. There will be nothing of the kind at Woodstock.

On the other hand, what Randolph says about your speaking to his constituents being an honour to the 'Fourth Party' may really be an argument against your doing so. Northcote certainly dislikes us. Why he should do so is not very clear. A so-called party which (if it is to be taken seriously at all) consists of only four persons, which has no organization, no leader, and no distinctive principles, cannot be regarded as dangerous, though it may be useful.

Wolff has always asserted that Northcote's hostility is owing to a scheme he is cherishing of forming eventually a junction with the Whigs. But putting aside the fact that Wolff always suspects everybody of everything, I fail to see how the present action of Members below the Gangway can either help or hinder any such political combination. I can hardly believe Northcote to be such a fool as to think that the Tory Party can purchase the future support of the Whigs by showing present incapacity to resist the Radicals. My own view of Northcote's attitude is that he has a constitutional dislike to decided action, and that he objects to, and feels himself incapable of, using independent action in his followers — a trait of character quite as obvious to his own Front Bench as is his behaviour to ours.

Yours affect.

A. J. B.

P.S. In October I shall be at Whittingehame — immersed in the composition of a Philosophical Lec-

ture which I rashly promised to deliver at the University of Edinburgh in the first week of November.

The Woodstock meeting was, I suppose, the culminating point of our career as a small company of Parliamentary irregulars, supplying what was, in our own modest opinion, a much-needed element of alertness and vigour to the solid masses of the Conservative Opposition. But the ineffaceable individualism of such a body quickly made itself felt. There were but four of us, but small as were our numbers, we could not always agree; and the fact became painfully apparent when the second Session of the new Parliament met in January, 1881. My own recollections of the episode are, I admit, somewhat nebulous; but Mr. Harold Gorst, in his book on the Fourth Party,[1] gives us an account of it, from which it appears that Lord Randolph conceived the idea of meeting the Radical 'Coercion' Bill, about to be introduced, by an Amendment limiting its duration to one year. He believed that the effect would be shattering. Those who hated 'coercion,' those who hated the Government, and those who hated both would all, for different motives, be found in the same Lobby, so that, as he saw the situation, Bill and Government would perish together in the same catastrophe. It seems, however, that neither Gorst nor Wolff nor I could be got to approve these tactics, and after a prolonged but fruitless discussion among ourselves, it was finally agreed to refer

[1] See *The Fourth Party*, by Harold Gorst, 160–66. (*Editor's note.*)

the question to Dizzy. He decided in favour of the majority; but nevertheless, our very wilful colleague was so enamoured of his 'dynamite,' as he called it, that he would have exploded it alone but for the intervention of his father, the Duke of Marlborough. As it was, he refrained from putting down his Amendment, though he did not change his opinion, nor did he quickly forgive Gorst, whom he appears to have regarded as chiefly responsible for his discomfiture.

This estrangement among the four friends, though not displayed in overt Parliamentary action, was sufficiently notorious to occasion Harcourt's gibe about the infinite divisibility of even the smallest and most insignificant fraction of matter. It continued, but it did not prevent us from sitting together; though I was requested to be careful to place myself between Gorst and Randolph, who were both prepared to speak to me, though unwilling for many weeks to speak to each other! It was before our reconciliation was finally accomplished that we all attended the party gathering summoned by Lord Beaconsfield at the house [1] where in a few weeks he was to die. On the 10th of February, he writes an account of it in the last, and certainly not the least amusing, of his many letters to the Queen. In this he boasts, not without justification, of his ability to 'weld into homogeneous action all sections of the Conservatives,' and he indicates the diversity of these sections by describing their extremes — 'Lord Randolph at the head of his

[1] 9 Curzon Street.

Bashi-Bazouks, and the respectable Mr. Walpole and Company, who view Lord Randolph with more repugnance than they do the Fenians, equally attended the meeting at my house.'

This thumbnail caricature was, as all good caricatures should be, concise, significant, and excessive. It was a farewell gift from a master in the art, but it was his last; and on April 19th the Conservative Party was left without a leader, and a new epoch began, in which the Fourth Party profoundly modified its character and its aims.

CHAPTER XIII

THE FOURTH PARTY

AFTER DISRAELI'S DEATH

SUCH calamities are familiar and inevitable, and had Lord Salisbury been in the Commons, had Sir Stafford Northcote been in the Lords, had there been no independent Conservative Members of Parliament endowed with Lord Randolph's temperament and talents, party politics would, I suppose, have smoothly followed their accustomed course. But with things as they were, what happened was unavoidable.

It is not that anything occurred with dramatic suddenness. A great figure was gone. His place had sooner or later to be filled. Who was to fill it? If the Conservatives had been in office, it would have been occupied without delay by a new Prime Minister, selected by his Sovereign and possessing the confidence of his party in the House of Commons. But the Conservatives were not in office, nor likely to be in the immediate future. Their leader in the House of Commons was Sir Stafford Northcote. In the House of Lords the Conservative Peers who had just lost their leader at once replaced him by selecting Lord Salisbury. The Queen (as we have recently learned)[1] privately assured Sir Stafford Northcote that she

[1] *Queen Victoria's Letters*, 219. (1881.)

regarded him as the 'Leader of the great Conservative Party.' But from the nature of the case, none of these decisions could bind the Opposition as a whole, and neither the practice of the Constitution nor party loyalty debarred any Conservative from endeavouring to obtain a position which, when the time came, would justify him in hoping for the place left vacant by Lord Beaconsfield's death.

No such ambition was ever explicitly avowed by Lord Randolph, so far as I am aware. But that he resolved to reach, either in one step or two, the summit of the political ladder, I do not doubt; nor do I see in such an ambition anything to criticize. Six months had sufficed to make him a prominent figure in the world of politics. The causes which had produced this startling result increased in intensity as time went on. The blunders and misfortunes of the Government in Ireland, in South Africa, and in Egypt provided vast and accumulating opportunities for hostile criticism, but the Opposition Front Bench did not prove fertile in effective critics. Throughout the country the rank and file of the Conservative Party, mindful of the Midlothian campaign, thirsted for retaliation. But who was there competent to retaliate? Randolph was their man. Audacious even to recklessness, born with a somewhat insolent wit, which, softened to social uses, delighted his personal friends, but, untrammelled on the platform, made him the most formidable of opponents, he gave his partisans exactly what they wanted, and gave it in

abundance. Dizzy was dead; is it either strange or blameworthy that he regarded himself as Dizzy's predestined heir?

But what had these ambitions, however legitimate, to do with the Fourth Party? With the Fourth Party in its first period, evidently *nothing*. Our business was the effective criticism of the Liberal Party, not the future reconstruction of our own. On no other assumption could the 'Fourth Party' hope to remain a party of four. It was not to be expected that a personality so self-willed as Randolph, once he realized his powers, could long avoid some sort of collision with the party leaders in the two Houses of Parliament. So far as the Leader in the House of Commons was concerned, this was obvious. Strained relations between him and Sir Stafford Northcote were the rule rather than the exception. Lord Randolph's biographer gives some illuminating examples of their private correspondence in March, 1883; and war was openly declared in two public letters written by Lord Randolph to 'The Times' in the early days of April.

These communications were intended to make a sensation, and they made it. The first of them was disapproved of by all the friends to whom it was shown, except Mr. Chenery, the editor of 'The Times.' The second was disapproved of even by Mr. Chenery. But in difficult and doubtful circumstances Lord Randolph was fonder of asking advice than of taking it when it was given. His audacious self-confidence was his strength, just as sometimes it

proved to be a most dangerous weakness. He was violently abused for the first letter. He waited a week, and repeated the offence in a second. In language of unrestrained vigour he explained that the Tory Party would be ruined if its leadership was any longer left 'in commission.' The result of that system in the House of Commons had been disastrous. 'Pusillanimity,' 'Vacillation,' 'neglect of hard-working followers,' and many other crimes and shortcomings were its inevitable consequences. A single leader must at all costs be selected, and there need be no difficulty in finding one. There were in his opinion three excellent men to choose from. Northcote, Cairns, and Salisbury. It was true that Northcote was 'negative,' and that Cairns was 'cautious.' But no such defects could be lodged against Lord Salisbury. He was 'English'; he had 'agitated Scotland'; he had 'arrested the attention of the Midlands'; in Lancashire 'his name and influence' equalled Lord Derby's. Evidently he was the man of destiny.

So wrote Lord Randolph. But Lord Salisbury, as was to be expected, made no sign. On the 19th of April (Primrose Day that was to be), Sir Stafford Northcote, on behalf of the Conservative Party, unveiled Lord Beaconsfield's statue in Parliament Square; and on May 1st there appeared in the 'Fortnightly Review' a third communication by Lord Randolph dealing with the problem of Lord Beaconsfield's successor, and significantly entitled 'Elijah's Mantle.' Who should don the departed prophet's

robe? In his March letter to 'The Times' Lord Randolph had named three statesmen from whom a selection could be made. But his appeal had been received in silence by those most nearly concerned. When he resumed his pen at the end of April, a new and more picturesque solution had already floated through his mind. He repainted his picture of the ideal leader in colours more glowing and attractive. Such prosaic qualities as the capacity for 'agitating Scotland,' for 'arresting the attention of the Midlands,' for rivalling the 'influence of Lord Derby in Lancashire' no longer sufficed. A man must be found 'who fears not to meet, and who knows how to sway, immense masses of the working-classes, and who by all the varied influences of an ancient name can move the hearts of households.'[1]

No name — ancient or modern — was formally affixed to this portrait, nor was any name required. The meaning of the artist needed no explanation; it was understood by all, and welcomed by multitudes. The spectacle of a young man scarce known in the world of politics three years before, wholly untried in any responsible office, thus publicly offering himself as the leader of a great party was a display of self-confidence so sublime, so ingenuous, and so skilful that none of the familiar canons of criticism seemed to cover the case. Should it be met with ridicule? — with invective? — with applause? — or with silence? Of these alternatives silence, from Lord Randolph's

[1] *Lord Randolph Churchill*, I, 252.

point of view, might well seem the most dangerous. In any case he took the most effective means of meeting it. He had spoken; he now resolved to act. He had preached that in a democratic community the ideal leader must show his leadership by moving the masses. He proposed to move them. His plan was in two parts. He announced, amid the applause of a united party, his intention of contesting at the next election the greatest Radical stronghold in England — namely, Birmingham. In the alleged interests of Tory democracy he set himself to remodel the party machinery. With the Birmingham part of the scheme I have nothing to say in these reminiscences, except that it had my hearty approval. About the party machinery, I must speak at greater length.

The reform of party organization was, of course, entirely outside the sphere of Fourth Party activities — as these were originally conceived. Our business was with Opposition tactics in the House of Commons, and with these alone. But Gorst and Wolff were in hearty agreement with Randolph's new plan of campaign, and this included, and was intended to include, under the thinnest of disguises, an attack on the party leaders. With this, for reasons thoroughly understood by my friends, I could not associate myself. Nor did they expect it of me. Lord Salisbury was notoriously my political chief as well as my uncle; and though I was not his private secretary (as Mr. Gladstone supposed [1]), I naturally wanted

[1] See Gladstone's letter to the Queen, *Queen Victoria's Letters*, 514.

him to lead the party rather than either Randolph or Northcote. Moreover, I mildly resented all this talk about 'Tory democracy' — as if Tory democracy was an invention of the Fourth Party, and in some mysterious way mixed up with the proposed changes in Conservative organization. To me the doctrine appeared to be a familiar truth under an unfamiliar name, to have nothing to do with organization, and to provide no possible cause of difference between my friends and myself. Britain had, in my view, long been a democracy, and was certainly a democracy in 1883, though borough franchise had not yet been extended to the counties, nor had votes as yet been conceded to women. But if we already lived under a democracy, must not every Conservative desire that, whether its basis were broad or narrow, it should have a Tory [1] complexion? If you ask me to express my meaning more precisely, I cannot do so in language more felicitous than that used by Mr. Winston Churchill:

'The central proposition of Tory democracy was that the Conservative Party was willing and thoroughly competent to deal with the needs of democracy, and the multiplying problems of modern life; and that the British Constitution, so far from being incompatible with the social progress of the great mass of the people was in itself a flexible instrument by which that progress might be guided and secured.' [2]

[1] I use the word with its English, not its Scotch implications.

[2] *Lord Randolph Churchill*, I, 293.

About such a doctrine as this no differences could ever arise among the members of the Fourth Party, and they never did. But the case was very different when party organization, not party principles, were in dispute, and when questions of organization were raised, not in order to make the political machine work more efficiently, but in order to replace those who were endeavouring to work it.

In order to understand the episode which for ten months (October, 1883, to July, 1884) disturbed the harmony, and even threatened the unity, of the Conservative Party, the reader must be reminded that there was, as indeed there still is, a part of its organization called the National Union of Conservative Associations. As the name implies, local associations supply its constituent elements. Their representatives meet in conference once a year at different great centres; they discuss questions of interest to the party, and elect a Council to manage their affairs when they are not in session. Neither the Union nor its Council possesses executive powers, but in an advisory capacity they do valuable service. The leader of the party controls in the last resort its central executive, being himself, of course, entirely dependent on his Parliamentary supporters. He appoints the subordinate assistants required to help him in his task. Among the most important of these in 1883 was a small body of distinguished members of Parliament selected by Lord Beaconsfield, called the Central Committee. This was the object of Lord Randolph's particular aversion.

All the members of the Fourth Party, except myself, were already on the Council of the National Union; and in the early autumn of 1883, the ingenious idea occurred to Lord Randolph that if by judicious management he could dominate the institution, and endow it with new powers, it might effectually further his political ends, no matter who was leader of the party. At the end of September, 1883, he outlined the scheme to Wolff; at the beginning of October, he publicly explained it to the Conference of the National Union, which in that year was held at Birmingham. The changes proposed were far-reaching, but easily stated. They were no less than the transference of all executive power and all financial control from the nominees of the leader, to the Council of the National Union. This revolution in party organization was sometimes treated as a contribution to the cause of Tory democracy, presumably on the ground that the leader of the party did not represent it.

Lord Randolph's majority on the new Council was not a large one; but on December 7th it appointed a small 'Organization Committee' on which he was supreme.

This new Committee set to work without delay. Their first step was to seek an interview with Lord Salisbury which went off smoothly, and in which Lord Salisbury agreed to send them a formal letter expressing the views of Sir Stafford Northcote and himself on the points they had raised. The letter was duly written on February 29, 1884; and in it the two leaders

observed that the National Union had not itself put forward any positive proposals, merely complaining that its opportunities of sharing in party organization were inadequate; that the leaders were of opinion that, although the National Union was essentially local in character, its Central Council could do much for the party. It could, for instance, stimulate and superintend local associations; give them advice and 'in some measure' money; improve their Press; aid their registration; promote the provision of voluntary workers during elections; and see to it that Parliamentary candidates were selected in time.

This document does not seem of a very exciting character, and few readers would have detected in it any intention of transforming the Council in the manner proposed in October by its Chairman. But this, we are told, was not the view of the Organization Committee. They received it with delight; they hailed it as their charter; and they drew up a wonderful Report to the Council dilating on the magnitude of the duties now imposed on it, and their consequent cost. They proposed that this should be provided by a large fixed contribution from party funds, supplemented by a 'vigorous and earnest appeal to the Conservative Party throughout the country.' They also, we are told, made some 'practical suggestions' for carrying out 'Lord Salisbury's scheme.'

Lord Salisbury, we are told by our leading authority on this episode, was 'much taken aback' by the construction put upon his letter. It is possible. He

must at least have been surprised at so novel a method of interpreting the written word. However, he contented himself with explaining that the Central Committee was appointed by Sir Stafford Northcote and himself, that it represented them, and that their positions 'could not be separated.' He ended by expressing a civil hope 'that there was no chance of the paths of the Central Committee and the National Union crossing.' In reply, Lord Randolph explained, not so civilly, that in his opinion Lord Salisbury's hopes would be disappointed, and that if, as a result, the National Union thought it desirable to appeal to the public, he 'was of opinion that, in taking such a course, the National Union would find that he [Lord Randolph] might be of some little assistance to them.'

The report of the Organization Committee and the 'Charter letter,' which provided the occasion for it, was submitted to the Council on March 14th. A motion for its rejection was moved by Lord Percy, and defeated by nineteen votes to fourteen.

At this point it may perhaps be asked what *I* had to do with this tiresome controversy; and until very recently I should have been inclined to answer nothing more than what may be found in Mr. Winston Churchill's biography — our chief authority on the subject. I remember, for example, separating myself from my colleagues so far as their designs on the party machinery were concerned; [1] and though

[1] I rather think Mr. Winston Churchill is wrong in supposing that

I do not remember it, I am quite ready to believe that I 'canvassed' the Council against Lord Randolph at one moment, and at another helped to make the peace which brought the whole dispute to an end. But I had quite forgotten that I took any more active part in the dispute. On consulting old letters, however, I find that I was not so fortunate. I wrote, it seems, from Whittingehame to my uncle on January 8, 1884, as follows:

'I send herewith some reflexions I have hastily made on the subject of the National Union and the Central Committee.

'They are too polemical in tone to be used in exactly their present shape; but they represent the head of the argument as it presents itself to my mind.

'Of course the document presents only my views, not those necessarily of the C.C. in its collective capacity.

'P.S. I think I fully explained my view of Randolph when you were here. He is, I think, quite capable of denouncing in a public speech the existing organiza-

during this period I spoke against Lord Randolph in the House of Commons, *unless* he is referring to the single observation which he quotes on page 343 of his first volume. It so happens that, while the Conservative Party were fighting with each other outside the House over the National Union, they were fighting with the Government inside the House over the Franchise Bill; that *in answer* to Lord Randolph I replied, 'with some acidness,' that 'my noble friend's efforts to be in perfect accord with the Conservative Party, numerous and well intended as they were, did not seem to be crowned with success.' Even assuming the 'acidness' (which after all cannot be found in Hansard), does this count?

tion. At least he told me so the other day, when, *having asked me whether it was to be peace or war between us on the subject, I said that if peace meant yielding to his pretensions, it was war!* We are excellent friends at the moment otherwise! My idea is that at present we ought to do nothing, but let Randolph hammer away.'

The 'reflexions' referred to in this letter have apparently been mislaid or destroyed. But a copy of them must have been sent at the time to Mr. Edward Stanhope, who evidently found no comfort in them. He desired a decisive treatment of the malcontents by the leaders of the party, a policy of which I expressed strong disapproval in the following letter to Lord Salisbury:

WHITTINGEHAME
January 14, 1884

My dear Uncle Robert,

I enclose a letter from Stanhope. He says, quite truly, that my memorandum affords no solution of our present difficulties; it merely gives a sort of outline of the arguments which may be used to support existing arrangements, and I quite admit that the time has not yet come, and I hope never will come, for making any public use of these. But I think that Stanhope's own solution of the problem is full of danger, and must not be hastily adopted. He desires you to come down, *ex machina*, and settle all our perplexities by defeating R. C. in the National Union itself.

It may come to this, but it must be kept in mind, when estimating the value of Stanhope's opinion, that he is anxious, and always has been anxious, to precipitate a public 'explanation' with Randolph. *I, on the other hand, am inclined to think that we should avoid, as far as possible, all 'rows,' until R. puts himself entirely and flagrantly in the wrong by some act of party disloyalty which everybody can understand and nobody can deny. By this course we may avoid a battle altogether, but if a battle is forced upon us we shall be sure to win it.*

Yours affect.

A. J. B.

The course advocated in these two letters was the one which, in the interests alike of private friendship and public policy, I always urged where Randolph was concerned. I had to admit that he was not an easy person to deal with. He rarely took advice. Even more rarely did he take good advice. Though admirable with subordinates, with equals he was difficult and sometimes impossible — in this respect the exact converse of the most distinguished of our younger contemporaries. Yet his originality, his courage, and his rhetoric were too valuable to be wasted, and wasted they always were when expended on a domestic wrangle. He would never yield to personal pressure, but he would sometimes yield, before it was too late, to hard facts; provided always that he had discovered their hardness for himself. On two

occasions during the period of which I am speaking did this happy change of front occur. The first enabled him to escape without much damage from a curious slip he made at his great Edinburgh meeting in November, 1883. He then rashly committed himself to the proposition that the time was not ripe for any Reform Bill which extended the existing borough franchise to the counties. I was present, and, supported by Lord Elcho (now Lord Wemyss), I then and there felt driven to take the very unusual course of publicly expressing my dissent, *on this point*, from the principal speaker of the evening. A few months later, when the Reform Bill was before the House of Commons, Randolph, who now supported it, was taxed in debate with his change of opinion. He attributed it to me and my speech at Edinburgh. But I knew better. Lord Randolph perceived without my aid that he had made a mistake, and perceived it before it was too late. As I shall try to show in a moment, he carried out a similar manœuvre with even better fortune in connection with his National Union policy, but in a manner which has concealed its true significance from the world at large. But this could never have happened if Edward Stanhope's disciplinary methods had found favour with Lord Salisbury, or if Lord Salisbury in his letter of March 6th had threatened Lord Randolph, as Lord Randolph in his reply had threatened Lord Salisbury.

Better counsels prevailed, and the negotiations dragged on without an open scandal until on May

1, 1886, Lord Salisbury wrote me the following note:

'Winn [1] has worked up an agreement with Wolff and R. C. which is satisfactory, except as regards the position of the Central Council.

'I have insisted that the opinion of the C.C. shall be given before ours is arrived at.

'The matter is now narrowed down very much to R. C.'s hatred of Stanhope.'

This hopeful note was followed on May 2d by a most important incident. Lord Randolph was defeated on the Council of the National Union. He at once resigned his chairmanship: announced his determination to withdraw from active politics, and contemplated, it would seem, abandoning his candidature for Birmingham. His biographer gives a vivid account of the effect produced throughout the country in Conservative circles.[2] 'The Times' on May 8th declared that 'the main question at issue between him and the official leaders of the Opposition is whether the internal organization of the party should be for the future established on a popular and representative, or on a secret and irresponsible, basis.'

It declared that unless the quarrel was made up, it left the country without an alternative Government. The Conservative Chairmen in seven great towns recommended that he should be 'earnestly requested to withdraw his resignation.' Many other symptoms

[1] Sir R. Winn (afterwards Lord St. Oswald), at the time Whip of the Conservative Party.

[2] *Lord Randolph Churchill*, I, 327.

of popular favour were unmistakably displayed; and to crown all, the Council of the National Union unanimously reëlected him to the Chair from which he had resigned. 'He thus,' says the historian, 'returned stronger than ever, neither disarmed nor placated, and the movement which he had launched was driven steadily and relentlessly forward.'

Thus, with dramatic emphasis ends the biographer's chapter entitled the 'Party Machine.' But the end of the chapter is not the end of the story, and the end of the story, as I understand the matter, though less dramatic, is more interesting and more instructive. It is also, as I venture to think, more creditable to Lord Randolph's statesmanship.

This, of course, is a matter of opinion. But what seems beyond question is that the drama as presented to us, though brilliantly narrated, hardly holds together. Let me recall the main points. In October, 1883, Lord Randolph declared war in order to 'place all power and finance' in the hands of the Council of the National Union. For seven months the battle raged without decisive incidents, though on May 1, 1884, it seemed to be drawing to an agreed settlement which in fact conferred upon the Council neither executive power nor financial power. Then on May 2d came Lord Randolph's defeat on the Council, his resignation, his fortnight's exile, his triumphant return, 'stronger than ever, neither disarmed nor placated.' In such circumstances, what could further delay the triumphant conclusion of the long-drawn

contest? Surely Austerlitz must be already won. Yet the cautious historian, though his tone is optimistic, merely states that the 'movement,' initiated by Lord Randolph, was being 'steadily and remorselessly pushed forward.'

For all this pushing, did the movement move? The story is simple. Lord Randolph triumphantly resumed the chairmanship of the Council on May 16th. Nothing much seems to have happened till the National Union Conference met at Sheffield on July 23d to elect its new Council. This consisted of forty members; and when the results of the voting were declared, it appeared that, out of these forty, twenty-two were supporters of Lord Randolph, and eighteen were supporters of Lord Percy. 'The Times' thereupon observed that the substantial victory rested with Lord Randolph, while as a practical commentary on this statement, Lord Randolph himself immediately proceeded to make overtures to Lord Salisbury. Peace (to which I am glad to think I made some contribution) was promptly secured. Lord Salisbury gave a dinner to the reconciled combatants; and there was a great meeting addressed by Lord Salisbury, Lord Randolph, and Sir M. Hicks-Beach in the Pomona Gardens at Manchester. We are told that Tory democracy triumphed. Yet, strange to say, the functions of the National Union which were to have been its organ remained unchanged!

How is this story to be made coherent? I agree with his biographer in thinking that Lord Ran-

dolph's political position had grown in strength during the ten months' dispute over his National Union schemes. But I do most seriously doubt whether the growth was due to the schemes or to their abandonment. There is, as I think, a much better explanation of the facts. What had made Lord Randolph's political fortune before October, 1883, were his brilliant Parliamentary and platform performances, seen in strong relief against the greys and drabs of our Front Bench oratory. Now his powers were never more effectively displayed, and never more highly appreciated by the rank and file of his own friends, than in the ten months of which I have been speaking. It was during the obscure and dreary quarrels over party organization that Lord Randolph made his three Edinburgh addresses, his Blackpool attack on Mr. Chamberlain, his speeches about the Soudan disaster, about Mr. Bradlaugh, about General Gordon. It was then that he proclaimed his intention of contesting Birmingham against the Radical caucus. All these performances steadily raised his already great reputation as a fighting Tory. The lamentations which followed his threat to abandon political life, when defeated on the National Union Council, confirmed his own view that Elijah's mantle was not far beyond his reach. But if he was a potential leader, it behoved him to look at party problems from a leader's point of view; and how could any man do so, whatever his prejudices, without perceiving that if all executive powers and all financial control

were transferred to an independent body, leadership in the ordinary sense would cease? Who, then, *would* lead? The Chairman of the National Union Council. Lord Randolph during his chairmanship was able to effect but little, and suffered defeat at a critical moment. There was no ground for supposing that the new Council elected in July, 1884, would be more fortunate than its predecessor. There was no ground whatever for supposing that, however fortunate, it could run the party executive with prudence, or successfully collect and wisely spend the party funds.

In my belief Lord Randolph had for some time perceived these truths. He had recognized that, through no fault of its own and no remediable defects in its constitution, the National Union was essentially incapable of giving him the kind of assistance he needed; but by the time he made this discovery he had also recognized that he needed assistance no longer. On the line of advance which he had selected in the autumn of 1883, no Austerlitz was possible; but, on the other hand, so far as he was concerned, no Austerlitz was required. His own right arm had won for him a unique position in the party; and, so far as I can judge, the tiresome and irritating intrigues, which took up so much time and bore so little fruit, contributed nothing of importance to this remarkable result.

Let those who feel inclined to dispute this conclusion consider the alternative. They must suppose that on May 1, 1884, when peace was in sight,

and again towards the end of July, when peace was actually attained, Lord Randolph held the same views about the National Union as he had publicly expressed in October, 1883; they must suppose, in other words, that he was still of opinion that the leader, or leaders, of the party, depending as they did on their Parliamentary supporters, would consent, in the name of Tory democracy, to hand over all their executive and financial responsibilities to the National Union to be publicly wrangled over once a year at the National Union Conference! This seems to me intrinsically incredible. But, supposing it true, what are we to say of Lord Randolph's behaviour in the very moment of victory when he had 'returned [to the Council] stronger than ever, neither disarmed nor placated,' when (at the July Conference) he had won a 'substantial victory'? How can we justify his acquiescence in the fate of the National Union — that unshaken pillar of Tory democracy whose cause he had been pleading for ten months? 'Michael Hicks-Beach,' says the biographer, 'laid the National Union peacefully to rest in an obscurity from which its members have only emerged at infrequent intervals to pass Protectionist Resolutions. Nearly twenty years elapsed before it recovered, at another Sheffield Conference, a passing shadow of its old importance, and the distinction which it achieved on that occasion may excuse the hope that its future repose will long remain unbroken.'

This is not perhaps a very kindly farewell, on the

part of his biographer to the important body with which Lord Randolph had been so long and so closely associated. But at least it indicates how unfitted was the National Union by its essential constitution to play the part assigned to it in Lord Randolph's scheme. As I read the story, he recognized the fact and in time; and, so far as I am aware, took no further interest in its affairs. He was being called to higher things.

But what about the Fourth Party? I became partially separated from my colleagues at the opening of the National Union dispute; Gorst became partially separated from them at its close. He disapproved, it seems, of the arrangement arrived at by Lord Salisbury and Lord Randolph, and the consequent coolness between the two friends was never, I think, wholly removed, But I gather, from the biography to which this section of my reminiscences owes so much, that the last meeting of the Fourth Party was not wanting in dramatic fitness. It had come into being some five years before, united by the common determination of its members to strengthen the Parliamentary forces opposed to Mr. Gladstone's triumphant majorities. Its closing act was to take a leading share in their final defeat. With two additions, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach and Mr. Cecil Raikes, we all lunched at my house in Carlton Gardens, and there discussed and drafted an Amendment to the Budget which, when approved by our leaders, was moved by Sir Michael Hicks-Beach. We four had on

countless festive occasions combined business with pleasure (or was it pleasure with business?) by contriving Parliamentary pitfalls for the common enemy. But this particular effort was destined to be historical. The scene in the House of Commons is admirably described by Winston Churchill. A somewhat languid debate, apparently leading to its too familiar end, then a slowly growing sense that something unusual was about to happen. Surely the attendance on the Government side was thin. Was an Opposition victory possible? Was it probable? How many Irish would vote against the Government? How many Liberals would abstain unpaired? The Division was close. Not till the tellers walked up to the table was the result assured. The Government was beaten by fourteen.

The shouts of the victors were a measure of their surprise as well as of their satisfaction. But the most exultant figure of all was that of Lord Randolph. In defiance of all Rules of Order he leapt onto his familiar seat, waving his handkerchief in triumph. Such was the last gesture of the Fourth Party, made by its most brilliant member. Born to oppose Mr. Gladstone, it necessarily perished with his Government; and on the next day Mr. Gladstone resigned.

CHAPTER XIV

THE REFORM BILL OF 1884

CHRONOLOGY has suffered some violence through my desire to present, from my point of view, a consecutive story of the Fourth Party up to its dramatic conclusion in 1885. This has led me far from the main stream of Parliamentary controversy into the cross-currents of domestic differences within our own party. The wider issues, however, were not without their interest in 1884, for they included, among other things, the embittered dispute between the Lords and the Commons over the two associated measures — both of them required to make a tolerable scheme of Electoral Reform — a Suffrage Bill which would extend to the counties the franchise conceded to the boroughs by Lord Beaconsfield in 1867, and a Bill for the redistribution of seats, which would rearrange the constituencies disorganized by the immense number of voters that were to be added to the register.

No one familiar with the recent history of Britain could be surprised that on such a measure there might well be acute differences of opinion between a Radical House of Commons and a Conservative House of Lords. But few would have anticipated acute controversy on the point which actually caused it. The majority in the House of Lords were prepared to

accept the Suffrage Bill sent up from the House of Commons. The majority in the House of Commons were prepared to subscribe to the doctrine that such a measure should without undue delay be associated with another dealing with the redistribution of seats. This, said the Conservatives, was good as far as it went. But it did not go far enough. It did not give security. A Suffrage Bill, satisfactory in itself, might be eminently unsatisfactory if yoked to an unfair Redistribution Bill; and about the Radical scheme of distribution we so far knew nothing. Again, the fairest scheme of redistribution would be useless if it did not become law till after an election under the Suffrage Bill had taken place. What security did the Government offer us against either of these perils?

So stood the question before the Franchise Bill left the House of Commons. On the Third Reading, Mr. Gladstone made a speech in which he dealt vigorously with the 'threat' that, unless franchise and redistribution were treated as practically inseparable, the measure dealing with the first of these subjects would be rejected by the Lords. The Queen regarded the Prime Minister's words as of ominous import, and the prospect of a dispute between the two Houses filled her with concern. She was determined, if such a dispute there must be, to keep the heat of controversy down to the most innocuous level.

Moved by these considerations she wrote to Mr. Gladstone expressing her regret at the strong language he had used on the occasion, and Mr. Glad-

stone in reply justified it on the ground that he could not 'maintain absolute silence in regard to the manner, little less than insulting, in which the House of Commons had been treated. Lord Salisbury had, at one or more public meetings, threatened its rejection. His nephew and private secretary — Mr. Balfour [1] — had made bold to indicate in the House of Commons the same result; and the same thing had been done by Mr. Lowther [2] from the Front Bench of the Opposition, in language alike violent and boastful.'

So far I appeared in good company. But my 'prophecies' about the fate of the Bill were singled out for special reference in a subsequent letter from Mr. Gladstone to the Queen on July 11th.

The unexpected appearance of my name in the troubled correspondence between the great Queen and her great Minister (due, of course, to my connection with Lord Salisbury) has only just come to light.[3] It somewhat surprises me; but its most surprising characteristic I have discovered almost by accident. My curiosity being stirred by the references to all this long forgotten oratory, I looked up Hansard to find out what had actually been said on the Third Reading of the Franchise Bill, and learned that the impression I had derived from reading Mr. Gladstone's account to the Queen was entirely

[1] I had not been his private secretary since 1880.

[2] Mr. James Lowther.

[3] *Queen Victoria's Letters*, Second Series, III, 510.

erroneous. I had supposed that I was on that occasion the aggressor, that I had, in Mr. Gladstone's opinion, used language which was 'little less than insulting' to the House of Commons, and that, in the face of such provocation, he, as Leader of that House, could no longer maintain silence. He seemed to me to imply that this was at once the explanation and the justification of the language used by him, to which the Queen had objected.

It seems, however, that we must seek another meaning for his words to the Queen. His speech evidently cannot have been provoked by anything I said on the Third Reading, for on that occasion he spoke before me. I imagine that what happened was this: It had already become clear to Mr. Gladstone before his final speech (1) that, in default of some arrangement about redistribution, the measure would certainly be thrown out by the Lords; (2) that he was not prepared to make any arrangement about redistribution till the Franchise Bill was passed; (3) that he was not prepared to dissolve under the existing franchise; and (4) that in the face of all these negations, the only course open to the Government was to frighten the Lords into acquiescence by a vigorous agitation in the autumn — a policy in which he would certainly receive the hearty support of the Radical wing of his party.

If these were his ideas, he could evidently make no real concession to the Queen in the matter of style. Strong language was a tactical necessity. If he was

to agitate, he must use the agitator's weapon, offering the best excuse he could find to his Royal critic. The accidental inversion of the order of events was of small moment. It injured no one, and did not affect the main argument.

The 'insulting' prophecies were fulfilled. The Government did nothing about redistribution; and the Franchise Bill was thrown out by the House of Lords on the Second Reading. Every one, from Queen Victoria downwards, seems to have been agreed that the country was now on the edge of a formidable constitutional crisis. Yet how slender was the occasion for an event so grave! What, after all, was the quarrel about? Was it about the Reform Bill considered by itself? Surely not. Both Houses were prepared to accept it. The Redistribution Bill considered by itself? Surely not. All were agreed that there must be such a Bill, though no hint had yet been given by the Government as to its character. On the inexpediency of holding an election under the new franchise till a reasonable Redistribution Bill was in operation? Again, surely not. This was undisputed doctrine. Where, then, lay the difficulty? Simply, it would seem, in finding a method of doing a very simple thing which majorities on both sides of both Houses were quite prepared to do or to see done; indifferent fuel, one would think, wherewith to feed the flames of a great political conflagration.

But the able leaders of the Liberal Party had ampler resources than might at first appear. Their

most interesting, though by no means their most effective, controversial method was to make appeal to constitutional rules and practices, which certainly had no authority, and were, I believe, of their own invention. To one of these I have already referred. The doctrine that it is 'little less than insulting' for a member of one House to express the view that, in certain circumstances, the other House would decline to pass this or that measure seems to me, I confess, to be little less than absurd. More serious but surely not more reasonable is the passionate condemnation of an appeal to the people when the two Houses differ. That such appeals should be of the utmost rarity is obvious. No constitution could stand a diet of dissolutions. But there was nothing intrinsically absurd in Queen Victoria suggesting that her people should be asked to intervene in a great constitutional dispute, and Mr. Gladstone's emotions on the subject certainly seem overstrained.[1] They may perhaps have been unconsciously heightened by doubt as to whether, under the existing franchise, the electorate of 1884 would be of the same way of thinking as the electorate of 1880.

There is only one other doctrine of the British Constitution as revised by the Cabinet in 1884 which it seems necessary to notice. It is explained and commented on in the following extract of a letter from Lord Salisbury to Sir Henry Ponsonby on October 20, 1884:[2]

[1] John Morley, *Life of Gladstone*, III, 130.

[2] See *Letters of Queen Victoria*, Second Series, III, 552.

'I do not feel any confidence that a conference with Lord Hartington would lead to a useful result, so long as he is compelled to conform his view to those of Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Chamberlain. This view is confirmed by a letter from Lord Hartington's secretary, which I saw just before coming here. The secretary wrote to Mr. Balfour, my nephew, intimating that Lord Hartington had seen my memorandum, that he did not feel disposed, at the point to which the discussion had reached, to make any proposition, but that he expected me to do so. I wish I saw my way to any that would satisfy the Government; but the speeches of Mr. Chamberlain, Sir W. Harcourt, and Lord Hartington himself (since Rawtenstall) seem to place the controversy on a ground from which issue is difficult. They insist that the House of Lords has no right to say that it will not pass the Franchise Bill till a Redistribution Bill accompanies it; and they do so on the ground that the Franchise Bill has been sanctioned by a large majority of the House of Commons, and by certain popular demonstrations. This doctrine, if accepted, would reduce the House of Lords to impotence. A Minister always commands a large majority in the House of Commons, and he can always get up demonstrations. The House of Lords, therefore, never could accept this doctrine. But unless they accept it by retracting their Resolution of last July, and passing the Franchise Bill alone, the Ministry will not be satisfied.'

The supporters of the Government had other weapons of attack which, if cruder than those constitutional fictions, were also more effective. The whole subject lent itself admirably to the use or misuse of familiar catchwords concerning 'popular rights,' 'hereditary legislators,' and the like; while it required no rhetorical ingenuity to represent the Tory majority in the House of Lords as animated by a sincere dislike of an extended suffrage clumsily disguised under a simulated anxiety for a fair redistribution of seats. It might be surmised that the agitators would be well content with such a brief. In practised hands it might easily prove formidable.

The prospect, however, did not frighten my uncle. I possess, indeed, no record of his tactical estimate of the situation. But he certainly did not expect to lose. No doubt he was partly moved by indignation at the way in which the Government were treating the House of Lords. If 'insulting' prophecies were deemed intolerable by the leader of the Commons, the leader of the Lords resented the Government's attempt to compel the Upper House to pass beneath the 'Caudine Forks.'[1] Doubtless in both cases deeper calculations guided policy; though, as it happens, we can never know whose calculations would have proved least wide of the mark had the fight been fought to a finish.

But the forces making for peace were powerful. The Queen was indefatigable in her efforts. She

[1] *Letters of Queen Victoria*, Second Series, III, 560.

enlisted in her cause all the Ministers and ex-Ministers of both parties on whose influence she thought she could rely. She protested untiringly against what she conceived to be the violence of Ministerial language; and was but little comforted by the modest concession to her views adopted by Mr. Gladstone. This (if I rightly understand it) amounted to no more than a self-denying ordinance by which Cabinet Ministers engaged themselves to refrain from raising the question of abolishing the existing hereditary Chamber till in October it should have thrown out, for the second time, the Bill which it had already rejected in June. In the intervening months they were to content themselves with exposing 'the gross and deplorable error'[1] which, according to Mr. Gladstone, it had already committed by its vote of June 26th.

The sacrifice does not seem burdensome, though it proved too great for some of the Ministers concerned. In any case, it wholly failed to satisfy the Queen. Anxious above all things to calm public agitation, she saw no important distinction, from this point of view, between attacks on the House of Lords for its 'gross and deplorable' errors, and discussion as to how it might best be mended or ended; between inflammatory accounts of the crime, and picturesque descriptions of the gallows. 'Mr. Gladstone,'[2] she writes on the 16th September, 'makes great shows of

[1] *Letters of Queen Victoria*, Second Series, III, 513.

[2] *Ibid.*, 539.

alarm and anxiety, but goes on agitating by his constant speeches.' But she had hardly indited this complaint before symptoms of a change set in. On September 25th, Mr. Gladstone writes a long letter to Sir H. Ponsonby, from which I extract (and compress) some important passages — the italics are Mr. Gladstone's:

'It has always appeared to me plain that if the Opposition desire a settlement of the whole question in the present predicament, they should demand from us more specific pledges in regard to the *principles* of Redistribution. *What do they want?* I have honestly tried to learn and have totally failed.... This is the first question. Why should they not reply? It would then appear whether we were tolerably agreed. I admit that there are some things which they are justified in anxiously striving to secure. But these things present to my eyes no insurmountable difficulty.'

This is surely a very surprising passage. 'There are some things,' says Mr. Gladstone, 'which the Opposition are justified in anxiously striving to secure.' In the opinion of the Opposition themselves, what were they? They were two. The first of these was full assurance that the Redistribution Bill would come into operation before the first election under the Franchise Bill. The first Mr. Gladstone does not mention in his letter to Sir Henry Ponsonby, but months before he had clearly expressed his sympathy with its substance in a letter to the Queen:[1] 'And

[1] *Letters of Queen Victoria*, Second Series, III, 518.

Mr. Gladstone presumes to express his hearty and entire concurrence with your Majesty's desire that a just measure of redistribution shall precede the next General Election.'

The second was that the Redistribution Bill should itself be equitable.

On this his comments in the letter to Ponsonby are most surprising. 'What' (he asks) 'do the Opposition want? I have honestly tried to learn and have totally failed.' From whom had he tried to learn? From the leaders of the Opposition themselves or those in their confidence? I find no traces of this curiosity in any documents that have come under my notice. It must, I cannot help thinking, have worked through very imperfect channels. However this may be, the mood which found expression in Mr. Gladstone's letter of September 25th was quite incompatible with that which dominated Liberal policy three months earlier. 'Gross and deplorable error' may have remained, no doubt *did* remain, the official verdict on the action of the House of Lords, but it no longer represented the attitude of the autumn and winter. The legitimacy of Conservative objections to the separate treatment of franchise and redistribution then received practical acceptance. Small difficulties remained in plenty; but when Opposition leaders met together in friendly converse, when Lord Hartington talked with Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, and Mr. Gladstone talked with Lord Salisbury, when difficulties were discussed in order

that they might be solved, a happy ending to the drama was evidently predestined long before the curtain actually fell at last upon a scene of general reconciliation.

This happy consummation was brightened, as seemed artistically fitting, by an unexpected touch of the lightest comedy. There was an interchange of ideas between the Prime Minister and the Queen on the character of the proposed Redistribution Bill. Mr. Gladstone, so far as I know, never gave, either to the Queen or to the leaders of the Opposition, the views of the Government as to the principles on which redistribution should be effected. Evidently they were of very modest scope; for when it came to consultation, he found the opinions of the Conservative leaders painfully subversive. He had told the Queen on the 14th of July that he 'perceives with pain that the tendency of the Lords to separate from the people becomes more marked with the lapse of years, indicated as it is by the increase of the Tory majority in that House' — the underlying assumption apparently being that the Tories were always against change, and the 'people' always for it. Yet now it appeared that the Conservative plan of redistribution (conveyed to the Government by Sir Michael Hicks-Beach) 'involved more extensive changes than Mr. Gladstone would have thought necessary or desirable.' [1] This was an unforeseen misfortune. But the Queen showed ready sympathy; and in a letter

[1] *Letters of Queen Victoria*, Second Series, III, 565.

of November 10th 'she trusts it may be possible to modify the too Radical nature of Sir M. H. Beach's proposals, though she cannot think that he can intend them to have this tendency.'[1] This may seem a singular form in which to convey comfort to a Radical Prime Minister; but certainly it is not without its humour.

[1] *Letters of Queen Victoria*, Second Series, III, 569.

CHAPTER XV

A NEW PARLIAMENTARY ERA

I HAVE so far referred only in passing to Mr. Gladstone's resignation on June 12, 1885, as the event which brought to its natural close the brief and chequered career of the Fourth Party. But this (I need hardly say) was among the least important of its consequences. Though it involved no immediate breach of historical continuity, and was due to no deep-seated change in popular opinion, it nevertheless marked the beginning of a new era in our political history; and few were the politicians of that day whose career was not profoundly modified by the influences which began to take shape in the second half of 1885.

What were those influences? Their very existence was ignored by the wits who described Lord Salisbury's Administration, which succeeded Mr. Gladstone's, as 'A Government of Caretakers.' [1] These

[1] Lord Salisbury formed his Government in the main from the colleagues who had served with him under Lord Beaconsfield. But Beach became leader in the House of Commons — Northcote having to take a Peerage because Randolph refused to serve under him in the House of Commons. Randolph himself became Secretary of State for India. Gibson, who had been the chief spokesman of our Front Bench on Irish affairs, became Lord Chancellor of Ireland; Carnarvon became its Lord Lieutenant; and I was appointed President of the Local Government Board, without a seat in the Cabinet.

observers supposed, not without plausible reason, that it was but a negligible episode in the main course of British history; they thought that when the general election had come and gone, the old drama, played by the old cast, would be resumed at the very place where it had been so gratuitously interrupted in June; and the 'Caretakers' would resume their legitimate occupation as 'Her Majesty's Opposition.' To be sure, there were observers in plenty who made less simple-minded estimates of the situation. But certainly there were none, even among those who instinctively felt that we were on the edge of a new era, who foresaw what even the first year of that era was destined to bring forth.

As we have seen, it began in June, 1885, with Mr. Gladstone's defeat on a commonplace amendment to a commonplace budget. It ended with his defeat in June, 1886, on the national issue of Home Rule for Ireland. In June, 1885, he was the undisputed head of what was (in appearance, at least) an undivided party, with a Parliamentary majority already large, and predestined to immediate increase through the support of the newly enfranchised voters. In June, 1886, his party was broken; the larger portion of it had changed its creed; its Parliamentary supremacy had vanished; it was defeated in the House of Commons; it was about to be defeated in the constituencies; and the Unionist Party, though not yet born, was already coming to birth.

By this surprising change of fortunes, compressed

as it was into some twelve months, the 'Cabinet of Caretakers' which took office in June, 1885, developed into a Unionist Administration, which, with two relatively brief interludes, remained in power for over twenty years. Its foundations were solidly laid in its first year — the year with which I am immediately concerned; and its principal architect, and some would say its principal victim, was Mr. Gladstone.

This sounds like sarcasm, but it is not so intended. Personally I thought, and think, that, although what he did was in my judgment wrong, only he could have done it. The contrast between Mr. Gladstone conducting the Midlothian campaign to a triumphant issue in 1880, and Mr. Gladstone leading the Liberal Party on the road to long defeat in 1886, is striking and interesting. In both cases I differed profoundly from his policy; but while to my (perhaps prejudiced) eyes, his efforts on the first occasion never seemed more than supreme examples of electioneering art, on the second they presented the more impressive spectacle of a statesman endeavouring with infinite labour to deal with a problem beyond his strength.

If we would read aright the drama of these twelve months, we must avoid the familiar fault of interpreting the first act in the light of what we already know about the last. And, as it happens, I am assisted in this historical duty by finding a contemporary survey of the situation, as I then saw it, in a speech I made to my constituents at the very mo-

ment when the curtain first began to rise upon the opening scenes of the New Era. Its occasion was my reëlection for Hertford on taking office for the first time in Lord Salisbury's Government. This event, from a personal point of view, was, of course, an important landmark; but the historical interest of the speech to which it gave rise lies wholly in the date of its delivery (July 1, 1885) and the fact that when I delivered it I was a member of the Government, and on the most intimate terms with its Chief. These collateral circumstances give a certain significance to what it says and to what it fails to say, which is wholly independent of its oratorical merits.

Let it then be noted that it preceded any speech made either by the new Prime Minister or the old since the change of Government. It preceded the famous utterance on Ireland delivered in the House of Lords on July 6th by the new Lord Lieutenant, Lord Carnarvon. It preceded the debate in the House of Commons (July 7th) which gave such offence to the friends of the outgoing Lord Lieutenant, Lord Spencer; and it preceded the notorious interview [1] on August 1st between Lord Carnarvon and Mr. Parnell in an empty house in Hill Street. These events were early skirmishes in the embittered battle, which was so soon to shatter British party organizations; and it is to this they owed such im-

[1] Mentioned for the first time in public by Mr. Parnell in the debate on the Second Reading of the Home Rule Bill in June, 1886, which closes the twelve months' drama with which I am dealing.

portance as they possess. My Hertford speech, on the other hand, had no importance whatever, and its sole interest now lies in the fact that it dealt with public affairs before that battle really began. It helps our chronology by showing clearly, because unconsciously, that up to the first of July, 1885, Home Rule was not the storm centre of British politics. It was, of course, a subject of interest, and I expressed my views on it with clearness. But no Minister of Cabinet rank had ever publicly advocated a Parliament in Dublin, and the schemes for conciliating Irish opinion, adumbrated by former members of Mr. Gladstone's late Administration, were of a much more modest character. I attacked them, believing that they tended in the direction of Home Rule, not that they constituted it. Nor did I suppose that more advanced views were then held by any important section of the Liberal Party.

In truth, Home Rule was never in Great Brtiain a party issue till after the general election of 1885; and the main interest of the first six months of the new Parliamentary era is to show how the change came about. To be sure, no Englishman was satisfied with the condition of Ireland. No Englishman loved what in the jargon of politics was called 'Coercion.' No Englishman loved crime. No Englishman could be satisfied with a Parliamentary situation in which the Anglo-Irish Administration of Ireland was the object of unceasing attack by the majority of Irish Members. The 'Mother of Parliaments' groaned

under a tyranny which permitted what was, in some respects, the most brilliant Parliamentary Party which the British system of representative government has ever produced, to expend all its eloquence, and all its ingenuity, in making representative Government in the United Kingdom unworkable. But though all recognized the ills under which we suffered, neither of the great historic parties was as yet prepared to give up the Union. When, therefore, on July 7, 1885, I laid strong emphasis on its value, it was not because I regarded it as in immediate danger, but because I thought it would be fatally shaken by the palliatives proposed for Irish ills by its Radical friends.

As things turned out, I unduly simplified the situation. I saw clearly enough the tendencies which were disintegrating the Liberal Party. I explained to my Hertford friends how small were the differences which in 1885 separated the moderate men on both sides. I prophesied (it required no great prescience!) a steady flow from left to right across the party line. But I did not tell them, for I did not then guess, the reactions which this situation was destined to produce on the Home Rule controversy.

In my Hertford speech I expressed some surprise that Mr. Gladstone should have insisted on abandoning office while still at the head of an unbroken majority. I might with equal justification have expressed surprise that Lord Salisbury should have consented

to accept it with only a Parliamentary minority to support him. Their respective motives deserve examination, for they throw a strong light on a complex situation.

My uncle's motive, I suspect, had little to do with domestic politics. He knew well enough that success in the approaching election was most doubtful, and that office without a majority could not last. He also knew that such a position gave small scope for ordinary administrative effort, and even less for Conservative legislation. But home affairs were not what mainly interested him at this particular moment, perhaps at very few moments. His best work as a member of Lord Beaconsfield's Government had been done as Foreign Secretary. He was now Foreign Secretary again, with all the added authority of a Prime Minister; and for six months he could hope to devote himself to restoring the shaken prestige of the country, without hindrance from colleagues, opponents, or House of Commons critics. Urgently pressed by the Queen to undertake this congenial task, his decision, though given only after much hesitation, is not surprising, and was never, I believe, regretted. He knew his capacity as Foreign Secretary; he knew that the country had need of his services, and he gladly gave them. But as Prime Minister he was required also to do other work equally important, but much less congenial; and though he did it, he did not always do it gladly. 'He complained' (says Lord Carnarvon in November, 1885) of the office of Prime

Minister, which he detested, though he liked the Foreign Office.' [1] A few weeks later, at the beginning of the New Year, he writes to Lord Carnarvon: [2] 'I am feverishly anxious to be out. Internally as well as externally our position as a Government is intolerable.' The same authority reports him [3] as being 'so engrossed in Foreign Office work that only with difficulty could any other subject be brought before him.'

I am inclined to think that in this last passage Lord Carnarvon showed an imperfect comprehension of Lord Salisbury's frame of mind. If, as I doubt not, the Prime Minister was reluctant to discuss Ireland with its Viceroy, this was not merely because the Prime Minister was also an overworked Foreign Secretary, but because on the larger aspects of Irish policy he and the Viceroy did not agree. As regards the immediate responsibilities of the Irish Administration, there was, indeed, no difference of opinion. Law and order must be maintained with such powers as the Executive already possessed until the new Parliament was in a position to review the situation; and when that time arrived, then, whatever the results of the general election, Lord Carnarvon (by arrangement) would no longer be in office. But the immediate needs of six months' administration were not what mainly interested Lord Carnarvon or what

[1] *Life of Lord Carnarvon*, 198.

[2] *Ibid.*, 210.

[3] *Ibid.*, 219.

he most desired to discuss. He had large ideas of what could be effected in Ireland by economic aid, personal influence, and sympathetic legislation. As regards economic aid and personal influence, Lord Salisbury did what he could. He passed the Ashbourn Acts; he permitted the Irish Viceroy to accept the private interview in London proposed by Mr. Parnell. He never, so far as I know, interfered with any part of his administration in Ireland. But when it came to sympathetic legislation, it appeared that in the Viceroy's view this always involved fundamental constitutional changes, and here the Viceroy could expect little help from the Prime Minister. The two statesmen had different ideas of what might be done, and ought to be done, to amend the fundamental relations between Great Britain and Ireland, and the friendliest conversations could never on this point have brought them together. No wonder that the hard-pressed Foreign Secretary shrank from long and difficult discussions with his colleague, which, from the nature of the case, promised no results. Many years afterwards, in the very last letter which passed between the two friends on Irish affairs, he justified himself for not having supported Lord Carnarvon in a certain House of Lords debate in 1886 by saying: 'You closed your speech with some eloquent expressions of your desire to satisfy the "national aspirations of Ireland." Rightly or wrongly, I have not the slightest wish to satisfy the national aspirations of Ireland; and I remained silent, because if I had spoken I must have

spoken to that extent against you, which under the circumstances I was exceedingly anxious not to do.'

This vigorous and uncompromising repudiation of Home Rule (for that was the 'national aspiration' referred to by Lord Salisbury) represents what had always been his opinions about a Parliament in Dublin. He thought it impracticable, and, if practicable, not conducive to the higher interests of patriotism and progress, whether in Ireland, Great Britain, or the British Empire. But as this, in 1885, was the ordinary view of most statesmen in both the great British parties, no special interest attaches to it.

There was, indeed, nothing unexpected said or done by any politician of eminence (except Lord Carnarvon) between Mr. Gladstone's resignation in June and the end of the election in December. Many were the new political connections predestined to follow that event, but few of these showed any signs of life before or during the contest itself. There were no surprises. Each statesman played his expected part in the expected manner. Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke were typically Radical, Lord Hartington was typically Whig. Lord Salisbury spoke as the great Foreign Minister and Tory Chief, Lord Rosebery played the very necessary but rather difficult rôle of Liberal peacemaker. Mr. Parnell selected for calculated abuse what was obviously the strongest of the two British parties, but for the rest contented himself with advocating the fundamental doctrine of his party. Each from his own point of

view did well; but none foresaw how much of what he was doing would be forthwith reversed by Fate. Who could guess that in a few weeks the leading Radical and the leading Whig would be in close alliance against their former Chief, that the Chief himself would be advocating Home Rule side by side with the Irish agitator who had so vehemently denounced his party, or that the late Conservative Prime Minister, defeated at the polls, would find himself supported in a vital division by a Parliamentary majority?

Did nothing then happen, before or during the election, to account for this singular discrepancy between its apparent course and its substantial results? A great deal happened; but it happened for the most part in Mr. Gladstone's own mind. There it remained unrevealed to the general public till the new Parliament was chosen, till the Conservatives were defeated, the Home-Rulers in Ireland triumphant, and the Liberals returned with a large majority — large, yet not large enough to give its leader that absolute majority over all other parties which he so greatly, and so naturally, desired.

These were noteworthy events, but they did not compare in significance with Mr. Gladstone's conversion to Home Rule. I do not venture to mark its beginning, to trace its course, or measure its rapidity. Lord Gladstone, with a certain air of triumph, tells us that it had reached its final stage before August 7, 1885,[1] when Lord Hartington (so he assures us)

[1] See *After Thirty Years*, 282. By a slip Lord Gladstone says 1884, but he means 1885.

discovered the truth, and communicated the alarming news to Lord Granville. The character of this final stage is well expressed by the same high authority in a conversation he had with his father towards the end of the year. It is worth quoting in full:

'I said to him [Mr. Gladstone] it is useless to give Parnell what he doesn't want, i.e., a County Government Bill; or what he doesn't care for, i.e., a Central Board; and that if we concede anything we must give them a Parliament. He [Mr. Gladstone] said, "I think we must." His views of late [adds Lord Gladstone] were expressed in his letters to me, and mine to Labouchere.' [1]

I suppose we may take this as a fair indication of the 'final stage' in the development of Mr. Gladstone's views, but it had been reached before August 7th. It had not been reached when Mr. Gladstone, on May 25th, while still Prime Minister, wrote a memorandum to the Queen on Irish affairs.[2] I suppose, therefore, that we may think of him as moving rapidly towards Home Rule during the period immediately preceding and following his resignation, but as having reached his journey's end during the early days of the long series of platform battles which preceded the dissolution in November.

Now, even for a statesman brought up in the

[1] *After Thirty Years*, 282.

[2] This is mentioned but not quoted by Lord Morley and Lord Gladstone. I get my view of its character from Lord Carnarvon's commentary. (Sir Arthur Hardinge, *The Fourth Earl of Carnarvon*, III, 200–02.)

Peelite tradition, anything which appears to the world like a sudden conversion must be a source of at least temporary embarrassment. But when the statesman is the leader of a great party, and the conversion occurs during the storms preceding a general election, these embarrassments may become formidable indeed. It is true that no man was better equipped than Mr. Gladstone for dealing with them. But even to him the situation must have seemed uncomfortable. He had to lead, he had to speak. Was he to lead towards the new goal, to declare at once and without reserve a new policy? Or was he to maintain a cautious silence and play for delay? Rightly or wrongly he chose the latter course. Home Rule, as we have already seen, was at the moment only a secondary issue. He was resolved to keep it so; and aided by a style which, though often magnificent, was sometimes cloudy, he succeeded to perfection.

Lord Gladstone, indeed, takes a somewhat different view. He draws attention to a passage in his father's Election Address [1] which he thinks would have 'shown any reasonably acute politician what was clearly in his mind.' No one will accuse the electors of Midlothian of being otherwise than 'reasonably

[1] Lord Gladstone's exact words are: 'Yet the electorate had general knowledge. While Mr. Gladstone abstained from any declaration which might seem to be a bid against the Conservatives for Nationalist support, any reasonably acute politician could have seen what was clearly in his mind.' (*After Thirty Years*, 285.)

acute'; but after all, Mr. Gladstone in writing this Address was, if Lord Gladstone be right, attempting an impossibility. He was endeavouring to make it clear to every 'reasonably acute politician' that he was anxious to do exactly what the Home-Rulers wanted, but to avoid giving his critics any ground for suggesting that he did it to secure Home Rule votes. These were incompatible objects. Publicity and secrecy are not so easily combined, and Mr. Gladstone can hardly have supposed that what was 'clear to every reasonably acute politician' was hidden from Mr. Parnell and his followers.

My own explanation is different. I think the passage quoted from the Address was a well-conceived part of the general scheme for securing 'silence and delay.' It could not be quoted during the election to show that Mr. Gladstone was in favour of Home Rule, nor after the election to show that he had quite recently declared against it. It breathed an admirable spirit of sympathy with Ireland. It committed him to nothing specific. Whether the policy of 'silence and delay' was wise or unwise, moral or immoral, is arguable. Lord Gladstone at the time [1] regarded it unwise, but eminently moral. He tells us that it prevented the Liberals 'obtaining the undivided support of the Nationalists,' and this may be true. But he forgets that it enabled Mr. Gladstone to retain throughout the election the undivided support of his own party, and the Liberal leader may well

[1] *After Thirty Years*, 288.

have thought that in these circumstances there was more to be gained by concealing the truth than by proclaiming it on the house-tops.

I am inclined to think that, as a matter of pure political calculation, he was right. Lord Morley and Lord Gladstone take a different view — basing themselves on highly conjectural estimates of the number of Irish voters in British boroughs who, but for Mr. Parnell's appeal, would have voted Liberal. But surely they greatly underrate the shock which any announcement of Mr. Gladstone's sudden conversion to Home Rule during the electoral struggle must have inflicted on his party. The damage would, I suspect, have greatly exceeded that due to the Liberal Unionist secession which actually took place in the following year. The public were utterly unprepared.[1] The roughness of transition had somehow to be smoothed and softened, and, without the aid of 'silence and delay,' no such operation could ever have been attempted.

Lord Gladstone, however, refuses to attribute his father's silence to political calculations. He justifies it by an appeal to far loftier motives. He tells us that for Mr. Gladstone to inform Mr. Parnell of his conversion would have been to deprive Ireland at the election of a 'free choice.' It would be 'bidding for Irish support.' It would, therefore, be 'inconsistent with honour and duty.' It would be behaving 'no better than the Conservatives.' Mr. Gladstone

[1] *After Thirty Years*, 309.

(Lord Gladstone admits) might in these matters be 'supersensitive.' Of this 'historians will judge.' But at least he was 'square and honest.'

With all respect to Lord Gladstone, does he really think that such statements will bear serious examination? How could any Irish elector lose his freedom by knowing Mr. Gladstone's opinions on Irish affairs? Freedom and ignorance may often be incompatible; but where lies the clash between freedom and knowledge? Had every voter in Ireland been made aware of Mr. Gladstone's conversion, would any one of them, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant, whether from the South or the North, whether Home-Ruler or Unionist, have changed his vote? It may well be doubted. But that the news would have produced a violent reaction among British voters is certain. Yet they were deliberately kept in ignorance about a matter which deeply concerned them. Their 'freedom of choice' may have remained; but their freedom to make an intelligent choice was intentionally withheld. One clear sentence would have restored it; but that sentence was never uttered. Such reticence may easily, from Mr. Gladstone's point of view, have seemed capable of defence. Among the courses open to him he doubtless thought this was the one least liable to objection. But were I hunting for the words that would most fittingly describe it, I have to own that 'square' and 'honest' are certainly not those that would first occur to me.

If, in the year 1885, 'reticence' about Home Rule

was but an error of judgment due to a 'super-sensitive' conscience, 'bidding for Irish support,' on the other hand, ranked among the crudest of political crimes. It was inconsistent, we are told, both with 'honour and duty'; it was, moreover, a crime to which, according to Lord Gladstone, Conservatives were greatly addicted.

Now it does seem to be the fact, to me a very surprising one, that about this period Mr. Gladstone was strangely haunted by the fear of competition between Liberal and Tory wire-pullers in the Irish political market. Its instrument was some form of intrigue — a term of reproach which comes often and easily to Lord Gladstone's pen when he is commenting on the actions of his opponents, though the thing itself can scarcely have shocked the statesmen who first shut up Mr. Parnell without trial, on the ground that he was a danger to society, and then proceeded to negotiate the terms of his release with Mr. Parnell himself.

Of more direct relevance to Lord Gladstone's views on the part played by 'intrigue' in preparing the way for Home Rule are his revelations of Cabinet proceedings during Mr. Gladstone's Administration in and after 1882. Put shortly they amount to this:

In 1882, the Irish controversy could, he thinks, have been settled by a Local Government scheme. This was favoured by Mr. Gladstone, but opposed and defeated by the Whigs. In 1883, the same drama was repeated — apparently without variation. But by 1884 these schemes, we are told, were already out

of date. Mr. Parnell asked for more; and, in the shape of Mr. Chamberlain's plan of Local Government with a supplementary Central Council, more was offered him. This, it is asserted, would have been accepted by Mr. Parnell; but, like its predecessors, was rejected in Cabinet by the Whigs. Thus three 'golden moments' (to borrow a phrase of Lord Gladstone's), three separate opportunities of reconciling England and Ireland had come and gone; and then, he tells us (as if it was a matter of course), 'Irish demands stiffened proportionately.' Mr. Gladstone was profoundly disappointed, but, after prophesying the woes which were destined to overtake the obstructive Whigs, did nothing more as Prime Minister in connection with Irish Government, except his memorandum to the Queen. Soon afterwards he resigned, and when next we hear of him (August 7, 1885), he had (as we know) already reached the final stage in his complete conversion to Home Rule.

In this story the 'intriguing' Tories have so far made no show at all. The drama has centred in Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet. The villains of the piece have been the Whigs. The intriguers have been the Radicals. It is they who seem to have somehow conveyed very precise information to Mr. Parnell about Cabinet proceedings, and to have obtained in return very important news as to what that statesman at different periods would, or would not, have been prepared to accept as a reasonable solution of the Irish problem.

Now, when was it, according to this new version of secret history, that the Tory 'intriguers' took a hand in the game? What cards did they hold? How did they play them? Who were they? The old theory, as commonly stated, was that in the British boroughs there were Irishmen prepared to cast their votes according to the advice of their leaders in Ireland. The character of this advice depended on the competing promises of British party managers. When these gentlemen began bidding against one another, Mr. Parnell, as was natural, raised his prices — till at last the virtuous Liberals, who loved reform for its own sake, found themselves hurried along the path of progress at a speed which they deemed inconvenient and excessive. The reason for this haste was, of course, the fear lest Tory 'intriguers,' who disliked all reform, would secure Mr. Parnell's support by insincere promises, and thus gain Irish votes in British constituencies, to which the Radicals thought they had a prior claim.

Lord Gladstone, who in many passages gives currency to this strange legend, has himself disposed of it by his account of what passed about Irish Local Government in the secrecy of Mr. Gladstone's Cabinets from 1882 to 1884. If the Tory intriguer existed, he must have been completely disarmed by the rejection of Mr. Chamberlain's Central Council and the 'proportionate stiffening' of Mr. Parnell's terms. The most skilful of party managers must fail if he has nothing wherewith to bargain; and this was now his

unhappy position. No Conservative statesman of authority at any time advocated going as far as Mr. Chamberlain's Central Council.[1] Mr. Gladstone clearly saw that it was impossible to go further except by conceding a Parliament in Dublin. We have no reason to suppose that Mr. Parnell either found, or desired to find, a halfway house. He, like Mr. Gladstone, had therefore come to the conclusion that it was Home Rule or nothing. No Conservative intriguer, even though the Carlton Club swarmed with Machiavellis, could have found in such a situation a fitting field for his activities. He had nothing to offer which the Nationalists would consent to take. The Nationalists would take nothing which any Conservative was in a position to offer. Big business was therefore impossible. I do not believe it was ever attempted.

It may be replied that this last statement is, from the nature of things, incapable of proof, that Lord Gladstone who we now know was in constant communication with Mr. Labouchere,[2] and through him had access to Mr. Parnell, takes a different view, and that positive evidence of this kind must be held to overbalance the negative inferences on which I have been laying stress.

My personal convictions are by no means based on negative inferences alone. But these seem to me of quite sufficient strength, and until I learn on good authority what bids were made at this period for

[1] Certainly Lord Salisbury did not do so at Newport.

[2] *After Thirty Years*, 287.

Parnellite support, and by whom, I need pursue the matter no further. At the moment my interest is not in the facts, but in Mr. Gladstone's beliefs about the facts, which, from some points of view, were much more important than the facts themselves.

As I read the situation, it was something of this kind: Mr. Gladstone was becoming increasingly anxious about Ireland and the refusal of his colleagues to consider any of the schemes for reforming Irish Local Government which were brought before his Cabinet. Lord Gladstone says he resigned on the Irish Question. He himself always denied that he had any hand in engineering his own defeat in June, and his denial must be accepted. But the event must, I think, have given him great satisfaction. He required leisure to consider his own position, the position of his party, and the position of other parties. What in particular was the attitude of the Government which had replaced him? Were they also in their secret hearts far on the way to Home Rule? There were indications that pointed in that direction. There was, for example, the Maamtrasna debate. He could not know that the line taken by Beach, Randolph, and Gorst, though in conformity with opinions they had expressed in Opposition, was contrary to the formal decision of the Cabinet;[1] nor could he foresee that when the Conservative Lord Lieutenant (Lord Carnarvon) reëxamined the case already dealt with by his Liberal predecessor (Lord Spencer), he would con-

[1] *Letters of Queen Victoria*, Second Series, III, 687.

firm the latter's decision, and that the murderers, in spite of Mr. Parnell, would be duly hanged.

But the Maamtrasna debate did not stand alone. He was doubtless impressed by the tone of Lord Carnarvon's speech on taking office, by Mr. Parnell's manifesto, by the rumours of Tory intrigue conveyed to him by Lord Gladstone, and perhaps even by mendacious rumours of what was said at the secret meeting in the empty house. Conservative policy, however deplorable its methods, might after all be moving in the same direction as his own. His sources of information, according to Lord Gladstone, were scanty, two or three old colleagues, a chief Whip (Lord Richard Grosvenor) who differed from him too profoundly about Ireland to be of much use, and Lord Gladstone himself, a devoted Home-Ruler, a firm believer in the wickedness of Tory intrigue, and the active correspondent of Mr. Labouchere through whom he was in a position to pick up as much Radical gossip as he cared to hear. Of the general temper of the Conservative Party, however, of the views of its most trusted leaders, he can have known but little, and that little may easily have misled him.

The policy of 'reticence and delay' had served him well. He found himself after a great general election the undisputed head of the largest party in the State; yet his position was difficult. Reticence and delay could not go on for ever. Henceforth his main interest in politics centred in Home Rule, but as yet his own party were not Home-Rulers. Reticence and delay

had inevitable inconveniences. In the very height of the election, one of his most important colleagues had been thundering against the Tories, who, as he elegantly expressed it, were 'stewing in Parnellite juice.' Obviously if this unsavoury metaphor represented the situation, it was to the Conservatives, not the Liberals, that he must look for his main support. But how was this unnatural combination to be effected? He was a disciple of Sir Robert Peel. Could not Sir Robert's methods be adapted to new conditions? Could he not use the Conservatives somewhat as Peel had used the Liberals? Could he not carry Home Rule by means of a Coalition as Catholic Emancipation had been carried, and Free Trade?

He determined to try; and, holding the views he did as to the trend of Conservative opinions, he seems to me to have been right. Whether he chose the right instrument for initiating this new departure, I will not say. In fact, he selected me.

It so happened that about the middle of December, 1885, just after the general election, I was one of a country-house party enjoying the hospitality of the Duke and Duchess of Westminster at Eaton. The gathering was intimate and purely social. Politics had nothing to do with it. Our host was a Whig. I was a member of Lord Salisbury's Government. Among the guests were Lord and Lady Cowper, who had ruled in Dublin Castle during the first two years of Mr. Gladstone's recent Government till Mr. Forster's resignation over the Kilmainham Treaty; while among the

younger and gayer members of the party there were, besides our hostess, two with whom I have been connected down to this hour by unbroken ties of affectionate intimacy — Lady Desborough and the present Lady Salisbury.

Into the midst of this society there suddenly appeared no less a person than Mr. Gladstone. Eaton Hall and Hawarden Castle were sufficiently near each other to be described as neighbours. Mr. Gladstone and the Duke were still old friends.[1] There was, therefore, nothing surprising in the afternoon visit; and to the present day I do not know whether Mr. Gladstone's primary object in calling was to use me as a connecting link with Lord Salisbury, or whether this procedure was a happy thought which occurred to him when he found me among the guests.

In any case his mind was full of Ireland. It could not be otherwise. 'Reticence and delay' were nearing their inevitable end. Herbert Gladstone,[2] though his father did not know it, was within a few hours of hastening this consummation by his calculated indiscretion to the Liberal Press. During this very visit to Eaton, in the course of a conversation with Lady

[1] The friendship was rudely broken by the events with which this chapter is concerned. The Duke of Westminster had been not only a friend of Mr. Gladstone, but a great admirer. He had his portrait, a very fine one, painted by Millais. But when Mr. Gladstone became Prime Minister with the declared policy of Home Rule, admiration was turned to disgust, and the Duke caused the picture of his former idol to be sold by public auction. It was bought by Sir Charles Tennant.

[2] Afterwards Lord Gladstone. (*Editor's note.*)

Cowper, an old friend and the wife of an old colleague, Mr. Gladstone declared that, if terms were to be made with Mr. Parnell, they must be made 'now or never'; whereupon Lady Cowper (good Whig that she was) smote the table with her open hand, vehemently exclaiming, 'Then, let it be never!' Evidently 'reticence' in private life was wearing very thin.

The general tenor of Mr. Gladstone's conversation with me on this occasion is shown in the correspondence which Lord Gladstone has recently republished.[1] But the only reminiscence of the conversation which led up to it is a fragment which, on Mr. Gladstone's invitation, I made public in the newspapers of July 5, 1886:

'The conversation, entirely informal, and, so to speak, accidental, which took place at Eaton, and which was the immediate occasion of Mr. Gladstone's first letter to me, herewith printed, consisted chiefly, if my memory does not deceive me, of statements made by Mr. Gladstone to me respecting the serious condition of Ireland, and the urgency of the problem which it presented to the Government. He told me that he had information of an authentic kind, but not from Mr. Parnell, which caused him to believe that there was a power behind Mr. Parnell which, if not shortly satisfied by some substantial concession to the demands of the Irish Parliamentary Party, would take the matter into its own hands, and resort to violence and outrage in England for the purpose of

[1] See *After Thirty Years*, 396–400. (*Editor's note.*)

enforcing its demands. "In other words," I said to Mr. Gladstone, "we are to be blown up and stabbed if we do not grant Home Rule by the end of next session." "I understand," answered Mr. Gladstone, "that the time is shorter than that." This is the portion of our brief conversation which has impressed itself most deeply upon my mind, and of which I gave an account to more than one person at the time. It is, so far as I recollect (though in this I may be mistaken), the only portion relevant to the correspondence which followed, and of which I enclose a copy.'

This is all I could remember a few months after the conversation occurred. I naturally cannot make any substantial addition to it now that forty-three more years have come and gone. But I may permit myself this negative comment: I am sure I never supposed that Mr. Gladstone's invitation would be accepted by Lord Salisbury and the Cabinet, for I knew them too well. I am equally sure that I never expressed this opinion to Mr. Gladstone; for plainly this was no business of mine. I was an intermediary and nothing more. I ought to add that, though surprised and deeply interested, I did not at the time realize the full significance of the episode I have narrated. Confident that it would lead to nothing, I thought it of small importance. I did not perceive that it was a necessary stage in the development, not of Mr. Gladstone's general attitude towards Home Rule — that was already fixed — but of his conception of the methods by which a Home Rule policy could best be carried

into effect. He thought it just possible that by the joint effort of the two great British parties the Parliamentary Union with Ireland could be more or less amicably dissolved. So thinking, he felt bound to make the attempt; and it was not till the attempt miscarried that his House of Commons tactics took their final shape.

These tactics brought the Conservative Government to a speedy end. It was well content to go. But the Cabinet seem to have cherished the illusion that, if they retained office till they were formally defeated, they would find an opportunity of 'bringing Mr. Gladstone into the open' and compelling him in full-dress debate to abandon the last rag of that veil of 'reticence' which had been so skilfully used to conceal this issue at the recent election. But Mr. Gladstone had the best of the tactical position, and knew well how to use it. By remaining in office, the Conservatives were necessarily on the defensive during the discussion of the Address. The Opposition could choose their point of attack, and, as they were in a majority, could thus turn out the Government on the question that best suited their own policy. This they proceeded to do. They moved an Amendment pledging the House to adopt a clause in Mr. Chamberlain's 'Unauthorized Programme' dealing with rural reform, and commonly known by the title of 'three acres and a cow.' This course had the merit of appealing to the newly enfranchised agricultural voter, of being disliked by the Whigs, and of being in high favour with

Mr. Chamberlain and the Radicals. Quite apart from its intrinsic merits or demerits, it had to be opposed by the Government, since it was an Amendment to the Address. The choice, therefore, was judicious and proved successful. The Government were defeated, as was inevitable. But they fell, not, as they had hoped, in defence of the Union, which was never attacked, but in an inconclusive discussion on 'three acres and a cow.' The discussion ended in a Division; in the Division the Government were defeated; and, for the purpose of turning them out, a defeat on such an occasion was as effective when it concerned 'three acres' as it would have been had it concerned three Kingdoms. Lord Salisbury resigned. The first half of this transitional year reached its close; and Mr. Gladstone, now Prime Minister, set to work on the double task of framing his Home Rule Bill, and converting his party to its principles.

With this change of scene the whole interest of the drama from January to midsummer was transferred to the internal movements of Liberal opinion. Lord Salisbury and the Conservatives, Mr. Parnell and the Nationalists, became spectators, anxious and deeply interested, but not in a position to measure motives or to influence results. For these reasons I do not propose to dwell on the months which separated Mr. Gladstone's advent to power in January and the rejection of his Home Rule Bill in June. They can neither be forgotten nor described. Yet I think my

readers will be interested in a contemporary letter which throws a vivid light on one important moment in this critical period.

The letter which I wrote to my uncle, then abroad, explains itself. I give it in its entirety:

Wednesday, 24th March, 1886

My dear Uncle Robert,

I have not troubled you with a letter so far, as I know that Jim [1] writes to you every day and Randolph occasionally, and I really have had no special information to communicate.

I dined on Monday night at the Bretts', a small man's dinner: present our host, N. Rothschild, Chamberlain, Albert Grey and myself. Ch. talked with his usual 'engaging frankness,' and to do him justice, very pleasantly and without 'pose.' I thought it might amuse you if I were to Boswellize our friend. So while the conversation was still fresh in my recollection I dictated some reminiscences of it which I think give you a better idea of the real Chamberlain (at least as I have always found him) than either speeches or newspaper criticism. I need not say that I should not have ventured to send you so long an epistle in my own vile handwriting, even if I had had time to pen it, which I have not.

You will note that throughout all that was said it was openly assumed that Ch. was going to leave the Government. I have myself little or no doubt that he will, but it must be remembered that Gladstone has

[1] Lord Cranborne. (*Editor's note.*)

not, or had not then (Monday), communicated his scheme to the Cabinet, but only enough of it to convince Joe that he, at all events, could not swallow it.

I have a strong suspicion that Dilke's position, and W. E. G.'s refusal to have anything to do with him, count for something in the decision at which Ch. has apparently arrived. 'He means,' said Fowler (Secretary to the Treasury) to me the other day, 'to break up the Liberal Party.'

Now for my fragments of Chamberlainism.

Rothschild. A great City man, who has never gone against Gladstone before, came to me this morning to consult me about holding a big anti-Home Rule meeting in the City. I advised him not to do it at the present time.

A. Grey. I have just come from the House and hear that the meeting is to take place in a fortnight.

Chamberlain. This is perfect madness. For the City to oppose a measure is as fatal as for the House of Lords to throw it out. It is enough to set up the back of the caucus from one end of England to the other. Whether we like it, or dislike it, the Tories are in a minority in the country, and it is only by the help of the Radicals that anything material can be done. As soon as this scheme is declared, I shall go down and make a speech to my Two Hundred. They say the caucus is not representative in other places. Perhaps it is not. In my borough it is absolutely representative. If I can get a unanimous vote, or nearly a unanimous vote, of confidence, the thing is

done; but the condition of it being done successfully is that the whole affair should not be supposed to be part of a Tory-Whig manœuvre.

. . . . . .

A. Grey. I think this time we shall defeat the G.O.M.

Chamberlain. Don't be too sure. I agree with what Harcourt said, 'We shall never know how strong he is until he has got rid of every one of his colleagues.' Consider what the situation is. He has a majority at this moment of about one hundred and sixty. Of the seats of the present minority, at least twenty-five were won by the Irish vote. I think it is more, but put it at twenty-five. That makes two hundred and ten seats to be won at a general election in order to equalize the parties. Such a thing has never been done.

A. Grey. At this moment if you were to poll the Northern counties, I believe you would find a majority of Home-Rulers.

A. J. B. If that be so, the prospect, if we are driven to an election, seems dark indeed!

Chamberlain. Well, part of my democratic creed is that if a scheme is truly absurd (and, unless we are all in a dream, this scheme is so), people can be made to understand its absurdity.

. . . . . .

Chamberlain. Yesterday, in the House, a moderate Liberal, as he called himself, came up to me and said, 'I hope you are going to stand firm.' 'Stand firm,'

I said; 'I always stand firm. But what does it matter to you?' 'Oh,' he replied, 'if you stand firm, seventy or eighty moderate Liberals will vote against Mr. Gladstone.' 'I am a Radical,' I replied. 'Why should their action depend upon me?' 'Oh! they wish to shelter themselves' (he answered) 'behind you.' There is your Whig all over! They dare not follow out the dictates of their own conscience, except under the shadow of a Radical!

A. Grey. The reason is that they know that the majority of their constituents are Radical.

Chamberlain. No doubt that is so, and it indicates the extreme difficulty we shall have in managing the constituencies at an election.

A. J. B. In this new cave there are many mansions, and it will be hard to make them all live in harmony together. But it may be possible, I think, to prevent those who are united on this question, though differing on others, from cutting each other's throats at the poll.

Chamberlain. The difficulties will be enormous, since the mere suspicion that a Radical is going to get Tory support would of itself ensure his defeat.

I get, and have for a long time got, a large number of political letters every day. There has been no increase of their number in the last week or two; they are not couched in more violent language either way, and about the same proportion as formerly express approval of my conduct. How do you interpret this? I interpret it as showing that the public have not yet

made up their minds, and are still waiting for a lead.

Now, Balfour, let us make a joint attack on the Whigs. The Tory policy I understand with regard to Ireland; and the Radical policy I understand. The Tories go in for coercion. I believe that, if that could be carried out consistently for five years, it would succeed. The Radicals go in for very large measures of Reform and Local Government. They are ready to allow the Irish to manage and mismanage their affairs as they please, up to a certain point, with a determination of coming down and crushing them if they go beyond that point — just as the North left the South alone year after year, but finally imposed their will by force. But the Whigs are too frightened of the Radicals to support the Tories, and too frightened of the Tories to support the Radicals. It is no particular secret now that what destroyed the last Liberal Government was not the Budget, but the proposal of a National Council for Ireland. The Whigs in the Cabinet would not accept it, and now we see them in the shape of Spencer and Granville, going in for Home Rule!

The great bulk of the London newspapers — of course I am talking of the Liberal newspapers, including Reynolds and Lloyds — are going against Home Rule, but the majority of the country newspapers are evidently preparing to support Gladstone.

You do not approve, I imagine, of the absurd system of double ownership in land which your people introduced in Ireland, and are now introducing into

Scotland. Of course I am now speaking without prejudice, and across the dinner table.

Without prejudice, then, and across the dinner table, holding myself quite free in an official capacity to use opposite language, I do not approve of it. My view about land has always been to municipalize it — a barbarous word, which, however, expresses my substitute for the absurd schemes of Land Nationalization. I caused my municipality to purchase no less than £1,400,000 worth of land, and that is the system which I desire to see extended. I do not know much about Broadhurst's Bill, but if it would require corporations to sell to individuals land which they have leased to them, I should certainly move for excluding corporations from its operations.

I think the lookout is alarming. Any important relaxation of outdoor relief would produce most serious consequences. State Public Works are absurd. Yet if this distress goes on for three more years, we may find ourselves '*en pleine révolution.*' I may be wrong, but that is my instinct.

I think a democratic Government should be the strongest Government from a military and imperial point of view in the world, for it has the people behind it. Our misfortune is that we live under a system of government originally contrived to check the action of Kings and Ministers, and which meddles far too much with the Executive of the country. The problem is to give the democracy the whole power, but to induce them to do no more in the way of using it

than to decide on the general principles which they wish to see carried out, and the men by whom they are to be carried out. My Radicalism, at all events, desires to see established a strong Government and an Imperial Government.

The only two observations which it occurs to me to make on those portions of the foregoing which relate to the present crisis are:

(1) That Chamberlain means if possible not to let Hartington be the man who is to throw out Gladstone's scheme.

(2) That we shall find in him, so long as he agrees with us, a very different kind of ally from the lukewarm and slippery Whig, whom it is so difficult to differ from, and so impossible to act with.

What remains will ultimately follow in the impending reconstruction of parties from this Radical move, I cannot conjecture. 'In politics,' said Chamberlain on Monday (in words with which in Randolph's mouth I am familiar), 'there is no use looking beyond the next fortnight.'

Yours aff.

A. J. B.

It was in fact almost three months before the dénouement came. The Home Rule Bill was read a first time on April 8th. Chamberlain resigned on March 27th. Hartington had never joined. The Second Reading began on May 10th. The debate

lasted twelve Parliamentary nights; and when the Division was declared on June 8th, it was found that the Government were defeated by thirty. They resigned. Lord Salisbury was sent for, accepted office, and dissolved. On July 20th, the Home-Rulers were defeated at the election by a majority of 118; and the new Parliamentary Era then began.

CHAPTER XVI[1]

SOCIAL LIFE

IF THE reader asks how I occupied my time between taking my degree in 1869 and entering Parliament in 1874, I can only say that the occupation which I took most seriously was my 'Defence of Philosophic Doubt,' published in 1879.

Then there was family life at Whittingehame, Strathconan, and London, resting on the solid basis of seven brothers and sisters, to whom I was bound by ties of the most intimate affection. To intimacies which had their roots in friendships born in the common

[1] As has been explained in the Preface, this chapter appears almost as it stood when Lord Balfour relinquished work upon his Autobiography shortly before his death. It is hardly more than the beginning of a first draft, which he had not yet put into shape or chronological order.

The few repetitions it contains have been allowed to stand, in preference to making changes in the author's wording.

Broadly speaking, the reminiscences of early games of lawn tennis belong to the late seventies and early eighties of last century. His Septembers were spent in golfing holidays at North Berwick every year from the middle eighties until the War.

The recollections of country-house visits are spread over the whole of his life after he left Cambridge. Lord Curzon's verses on the 'Souls' were written in 1889. As regards music, the period he had most in mind was again the seventies and eighties.

His interest in all the pursuits mentioned here lasted as long as his life, and he had intended to carry his accounts of them all into the later years. (*Editor's note.*)

life of country-house association with friends and relations, I owe no small fraction of my happiness; and these could never have grown into easy intimacy if it had not been for the development of games which form so striking an aspect of modern social life.

During the years of which I speak, it is not too much to say that my life at this time depended largely upon games, and the social accompaniments of games, and that games, almost from the nature of the case, depended upon the opportunities which presented themselves. About this period lawn tennis was invented; and golf underwent an expansion which amounted almost to a revolution. It is not easy from my point of view to exaggerate the importance of these events. They were, it is true, but games, which may seem to the careless observer but trifles — nursery toys unworthy of serious attention. But in truth they have profoundly affected the social life of the period with which I am concerned; and are intimately connected with the generation to which I belong.

The serious reader must, therefore, forgive me for making some explanatory observations. Let him remember, then, that one of the most magnificent, interesting, and difficult games ever devised by the ingenuity of man — court tennis — requires, as its name implies, a specially devised court in which to play. Such a court is very costly, involves buildings which require a great deal of money to construct, and are of little use to those who possess them unless they

have the opportunity of early and special practice, and skilled professionals to superintend it. I do not suppose that any man, whatever his activity, ever became a sufficiently skilful court tennis player who began his training even in the most vigorous middle age. In spite of obvious points of resemblance between the ancient game of court tennis and its remote descendant, modern lawn tennis, their differences are too profound to make skill at the one in any real sense a preparation for the other. Notwithstanding the English love of games, there are, I believe, at this moment only half a dozen private courts in England; there are certainly none in Scotland; and I understand but one in Ireland. The courts at Cambridge and Oxford are admirable; but Brighton is the only watering-place, and Manchester the only provincial town (so far as I know), which possess such courts; and there seems little probability that their number is likely to be increased.

The fate of lawn tennis is very different. I can, however, remember its birth. In the seventies of the last century tentative efforts were being made in many parts of this island to discover an outdoor game in which balls and rackets would be the main instruments, which could be played unhampered by the obstacles which made a great development of court tennis impossible. I remember my own family experimenting on the lawns at Whittingehame.

It was, however, at Latimer, the house of Lord and Lady Chesham, under the inspiration of the three

charming daughters of the house,[1] that I had my first experience of lawn tennis. The game which I first played on the lawns at Latimer was afterwards, in the early eighties, transferred to the gardens at Devonshire House in Piccadilly, and these became, as the game developed, a regular centre of afternoon amusement. Lady Desborough, then still Miss Fane, and in her teens, has told me since how from the upper windows of her Uncle Henry Cowper's house in Stratton Street, where she lived at this period, Devonshire House Gardens could be seen. She well remembers that during the intervals of the more serious studies involved by her being prepared for confirmation, she would look out from the schoolroom window and see all the Latimer party, including Alfred Lyttelton, myself, her own future husband Willie Grenfell, and many others, amusing ourselves in this new fashion.

Although the early stages of lawn tennis were worked out in England, it is not English in the sense in which cricket is English, golf Scottish, and court tennis French. Legend asserts, I suspect untruly, that in old Paris courts were to be found in every street. The very names of important parts of the structure of a tennis court — such as the 'tambour,' the 'grille,' the 'dedans,' and the 'galeries' — speak loudly to the most careless ears of its French origin, while few of the thousands who use the phrase 'deuce'

[1] Afterwards Countess of Leicester, Viscountess Cobham, and Duchess of Westminster. (*Editor's note.*)

in proclaiming their lawn-tennis score are aware of its French pedigree. For the most part they do not know that it is borrowed from an English perversion of a French phrase 'à deux.'

The nationality of golf has practically never been disputed. But how many of those who play it are aware that its Scottish origin is strikingly and amusingly attested by the fact that among the laws passed by a Scottish Parliament was one forbidding Scotsmen to play the game of golf, on the ground that it prevented them practising archery to fight the English.

It is obvious from these casual observations how important was the part my surroundings played in the development of my taste for games, whose importance in my life-history I have endeavored to indicate. It was due to one happy accident that I was brought up so much at Hatfield to which a tennis court was attached, and that I was educated at a university where court tennis has always been favoured. But my good fortune extended to the Scottish county where I was born and where I still live.

I had the luck to be born and domiciled in East Lothian. East Lothian is to this day, as I think, the paradise of golfers; and Whittingehame lies near its centre. If I did not feel the full fascination of the game until I was past my teens, this was, I doubt not, due to my father's early death, and the fact that I spent the critical years at schools and University, which in those days of darkness, very unlike the pre-

sent ones, knew nothing of golf and had no opportunities of practising it. This was a period when an English gardener could in all good faith describe the game to an English enquirer as a kind of 'Scottish croquet.'

I began golf too late in my life to excel — although I won on more than one occasion the House of Commons handicap, but I do not remember what the handicap was. That I began it at all is due to the good fortune of the geographical position of my home. It so happened that this enabled me to perform a service in relation to the water-supply of my neighbours in the Royal Burgh of North Berwick. In kindly recognition of the services then rendered, I was enrolled among its citizens; and I remember returning thanks for the honour under an umbrella, during a downpour of rain so violent that it suggested doubts whether fresh water was the gift of Heaven of which they stood in need. But I owe more to North Berwick than the honours of citizenship. I became infatuated with golf, on the pursuit of which the prosperity of the borough largely depended, and I met golfing friends — notably Mr. Walter de Zoete, Mr. John Laidley, and the late Mr. John Penn — with whom, during many years, I spent the happiest hours of my life.

To be a great golfing centre involves proximity to great golf courses, and good golf courses, when I was young, were in their main features the handiwork of nature, not of architects and landscape gardeners, who might help, but could rarely create, their essential

qualities. A perfect golf course requires a substratum of natural sea turf, unbroken by cultivation, broken if at all only by sandy inlets and other natural inequalities. The southern shores of the Firth of Forth, from the gates of Gosford, through North Berwick, east and south to the lighthouse beyond Dunbar, are largely made up of ideal golf courses in a marvellous succession, until they are interrupted by the towering cliffs of Saint Abb's Head, where the purple slopes of the Lammermoors finally lose themselves in the North Sea. These have all the physical qualities which the golfer can demand, and they possess also the beautiful surroundings so often characteristic of famous golf courses. The coast of Fife, the Firth of Forth, the Isle of May, and the Bass Rock are visible from every part of the curved and rocky coast which slopes away to the southeast from every golf course in this part of Scotland. Nature has done everything which the golfer can ask for, or the lover of nature demand. Tantallon, Dunbar Castle, Fast Castle, and the rocky scenery along the coast supply every element of the picturesque.

In the years, therefore, which followed my conversion to golf, I spent each September at North Berwick, at the Bass Rock Hotel, or in later years at Bradbury's, in rooms which looked down upon the seventeenth green and the first tee, framed in a landscape embracing the little harbour, the Isle of May and other islands which skirt the Firth of Forth, and the stately profile of the Bass Rock.

Even now I never drive down the hill past Bradbury's without thinking of it as, in some respects, a second home. When at North Berwick I lived a solitary but well-filled life, playing two rounds or more of golf each day, and in the evenings carrying on my official work and such philosophic and literary undertakings as I happened to be engaged on. Each Friday, after my morning's round, I drove to Whittingehame, in the best substitute that could then be found for a modern motor-car — a brougham with a pair of horses — and spent the week-end with my family and guests. On Monday I drove back to North Berwick in time for the afternoon's round, and the happy experiences of the week before on the golf course were repeated, never with satiety.

During these years of which I am speaking, when neither in London nor at Whittingehame, I spent most of my time in country houses visiting my friends, and it was the society of these country houses which in no small degree gave colour to my life. For purposes of week-end visiting, proximity to London was, of course, a great advantage. This made it easy to do all that friendship and hospitality suggested, and, fortunately for me, they suggested much. Among such houses were Hatfield, Panshanger, and Lord Cowper's other country house, Wrest; Latimer, Taplow, Cliveden, and the group of Rothschild houses, whose delightful entertainment will never be forgotten by their friends. But the country-house life of which I

am thinking was not restricted to houses within an hour or two of London, nor of week-end parties which came to their natural close only a few hours after they had assembled. Nothing could exceed the charm, for example, of Wilton, and the varied company which collected round the Pembrokes, and their relatives [1] at Ashridge.

The framework provided at Stanway in Gloucestershire was another which seemed made for the sort of parties of which I am speaking. Stanway is in every characteristic an English manor house of the best period. In the course of a long history, it once belonged to a Tracy heiress, who married, in the middle of the eighteenth century, the Lord Wemyss of the day, head of the Charteris family, my neighbours in East Lothian. His descendant in turn married Miss Wyndham,[2] who was our hostess during many memorable visits.

The house, with its Inigo Jones Gate House and façade and beautiful hall with windows filled with original glass, is unspoilt by modern changes. Behind it the gardens slope upwards towards the Cotswolds, from which are seen the valleys of the Severn and the Avon, the Malvern Hills, and beyond them all, the hills of Wales. In front of the house, cheek by jowl with the church, stands the old Tithe Barn, to this day sufficient for every possible activity of local

[1] Earl and Countess Brownlow. (*Editor's note.*)

[2] Daughter of the Honourable Percy Wyndham of Clouds. (*Editor's note.*)

hospitality, whether in the way of acting, dancing, public speaking, or anything else.

In my memory Stanway was associated through many years with a group of friends who have perhaps found a place in English social history. It is not altogether surprising that, when an ingenious observer found a nickname for this group, that the nickname should stick. I cannot from my own memory throw any light upon its origin, but am prepared to say, on the authority of the recollection of Lady Wemyss and Lady Desborough, that the person responsible was Lord Charles Beresford, the date 1887, the occasion a dinner-party given by Lady Brownlow. To me the name of 'Souls' seemed always meaningless and slightly ludicrous. It seems to imply some kind of organization and purpose, where no organization or purpose was dreamed of. It seems to suggest a process of selection possibly even by rejection, by a group which, in so far as it had any separate existence, was a spontaneous and natural growth, born of casual friendship and unpremeditated sympathy.

There would, I imagine, be no existing record even of the names of those who were, or were supposed to be, its members, had it not been for the wit and industry of George Curzon,[1] to whom we are indebted for the rhymed list of guests invited to two dinner-parties of which he was the organizer as well as the Poet-Laureate. These rhymes have been preserved by Lady Oxford, and immortalized by her

[1] Afterwards Marquess Curzon of Kedleston. (*Editor's note.*)

in her own Autobiography.[1] Herself one of the most brilliant members of the group, she is now its recognized historian. Thus the 'Souls' have had their praises sung by a future Viceroy of India, and are given unexpected fame by the expert pen of a Prime Minister's wife. This is surely enough.

Their generation is fast disappearing, and most of us find its chronicles overshadowed by melancholy recollections. But this must happen in the case of all reminiscences, and mine are no exception. To them I must now return.

Important as was the part played by country-house visiting in my scheme of life, London was, from the nature of the case, the centre of my main activities. Putting politics on one side, it was in London, during the earlier period of my life, that I became acquainted with contemporary developments in music and painting, to say nothing of society.

As regards painting, I owed my friendship with Burne-Jones and his family to the good offices of Blanche, Lady Airlie, who had been a friend of my mother's, in days gone by. I do not remember how it all came about. I only know that one day by a happy inspiration she drove me to Burne-Jones's house and studio, in North End Road, Hammersmith. I at once fell a prey both to the man and his art.

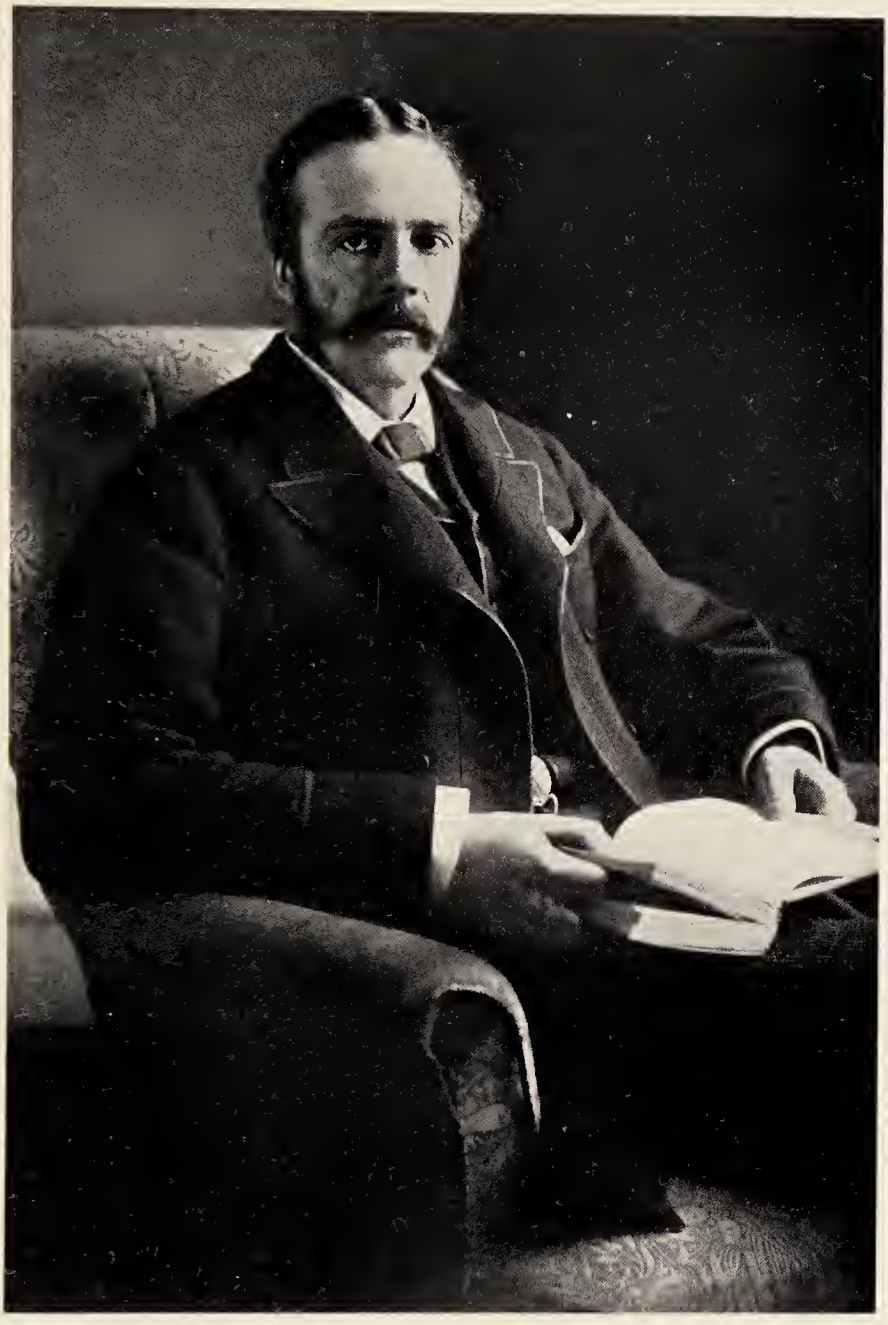
My visit bore immediate fruit. I had bought No. 4, Carlton Gardens, in the year 1871, and the house remained in my possession during the rest of my

[1] See *The Autobiography of Margot Asquith*, 176. (*Editor's note.*)

active life. It so happens that the principal drawing-room was, as London drawing-rooms go, long and well-lit, and the happy thought occurred to me to ask my new friend to design for it a series of pictures characteristic of his art. This must have been in the early seventies, but, alas, his death in 1898 separated us before his designs in every case were quite finished. The subject I left entirely to him. The choice of the Perseus Legend was therefore not mine, but I have never regretted it. Some other pictures of his, notably the great Wheel of Fortune, are still hanging on my walls.

Music, however, in these early years of comparative leisure was a more continuous interest in my London life than art. Saint James's Hall, now the site of the Piccadilly Hotel, was for many years devoted on Mondays and Saturdays to excellent concerts of chamber music, under the guidance and inspiration of Joachim. Moreover, on Saturday afternoons the tastes of those of us who loved orchestral music were admirably ministered to by the Crystal Palace Orchestra, under Sir Augustus Mann. Motors did not then exist, but a special train service admirably served the concert-goers.

At that time much of the best music was given in private houses. It was, I believe, at Sir Frederick Leighton's studio that I first met Mrs. Percy Wyndham, her son George, and her daughter Mary.



MR. BALFOUR AT NO. 4, CARLTON GARDENS

CHAPTER XVII[1]

AMERICA, 1917

FROM a personal point of view my account of the events which led up to my first journey to the United States in 1917 must begin with my rising from a sick bed to attend the Conference at Buckingham Palace summoned by the King in order to heal, if possible, the wounds which threatened the life of the first Coalition Government. The negotiations proved entirely ineffectual, and the Government broke up, leaving Lloyd George the most powerful member of the Liberal wing, and the obvious successor of Mr. Asquith. Bonar Law was leader of the Unionists, with a dominating voice in the allocation of offices, on pure ground of numbers.

[1] The unfinished state of this chapter is perhaps most visible in its omissions. A member of Lord Balfour's staff on the Mission to Washington who has kindly verified the accuracy of the incidents recorded, writes: 'Of course it is only a brief outline, and records very summary impressions. There is little mention of the proceedings of the Mission itself; of the extraordinary number of speeches which A. J. B. found it possible to make, always throwing new light on the subject he dealt with; the doubt as to whether it would be wise to allow us to drive through New York on landing, in the same way the French Mission had done — a point on which A. J. B. was very firm; the week-end visit to the Lansings in Virginia, where he and L. started talking at ten, and went on without ceasing till five. Everything was discussed without any reserve or restraint whatever.' (*Editor's note.*)

It was when we were walking away from the Palace that he asked me whether, if the break-up came, I would take the Foreign Office in succession to Grey, with whom, in so far as our spheres of activity had touched each other during the war, I had always worked on the most friendly terms. I assented to the proposal.

But I was still suffering from illness, and unfortunately was obliged to go to recruit at Brighton at this very critical moment in public affairs. It was during this period that I wrote the covering letter to the Note on Allied War Aims which President Wilson had demanded in connection with America's entry into the war. I do not think this paper was at any time formally submitted to the Cabinet, but I was well acquainted with their views, and no objection was raised then or afterwards to what I had written.

America had just entered the war. This raised innumerable questions of the first importance, and of the utmost variety — naval, military, financial, and international. Opportunity for personal intercourse had become necessary if they were to be successfully solved. Mr. Lloyd George asked me to go to Washington, and I accepted, though with not a little diffidence.

I went, supported by an admirable staff, drawn from all the departments immediately concerned. This included Eric Drummond, the private secretary of my predecessor at the Foreign Office. I was fortunate in securing his services when I took Grey's place, and from then onwards either in that capacity or in

the infinitely more important one of Secretary-General to the League of Nations, he has done incalculable service to the cause of European peace. I attempt no catalogue of the others of our Mission with whom I had such happy associations. I may, however, mention here the personality of Mr. J. H. Thomas, now Lord Privy Seal. He was not a member of my staff, but was in the United States on public business of another kind. It remains in my memory that on one of our first mornings in Washington, I went down to the Government Offices to talk business, but at the moment of my arrival found nobody at hand to talk business with. I went from room to room, saying, 'Where is everybody?' but got no satisfactory answer until at last I found a well-instructed person who told me that Mr. Thomas had been invited to give an address to the Cabinet on the attitude of the British working-man towards the war. This was too good an opportunity for me to lose, and I invited myself to join the company. I was well advised, for it was one of the best things I ever heard done. Nor was it an easy thing to do. I listened with admiration, and have looked on J. H. Thomas with different eyes ever since.

To return, however, to our journey. The Admiralty, who were responsible for our safety, were naturally anxious in these days of the outburst of unrestricted submarine activity, and the utmost precautions were taken to keep our movements on land secret before we sailed. The course of our journey

from London to the place of our embarkation on the Clyde was, therefore, kept carefully concealed. I regret to say that my share in this operation was of a sort which was bound to destroy my whole prestige as a master of secret diplomacy in the eyes of my staff. We were stopped without notice at Dumfries under Admiralty orders, and the utmost avoidance of publicity was enjoined upon us all. With what contemptuous indignation, therefore, did my companions discover that I had destroyed all hope of preserving the *incognito* upon which our safety was supposed to depend by supplying a specimen of my signature in response to a civil request made by the lift-boy at the Station Hotel. I had no excuse to offer when reproached with this singular indiscretion, and my authority received a shock from which it never recovered.

This disgraceful episode over, we embarked in due course, and arrived without adventure at Halifax. Sea-sickness apart, my personal recollections of the voyage are connected with the anxiety regarding the toll of ships sunk by German submarines, the news of which pursued us unintermittently by wireless as we crossed the Atlantic.

My lodging in Washington was a charming house put at my disposal by the hospitality of the United States Government, and belonging to Mr. Breckinridge Long. I cannot speak of it without recalling an incident of my stay there which I look back upon with abiding pleasure. Every morning I was sur-

prised and pleased to find two charming children waving Union Jacks when I left the doorstep for the business of the day. I felt that their welcoming smile supplied the one thing that our luxurious dwelling lacked. They made a great difference to me, and I was always delighted to see them, and got into the habit of looking for them every morning. They were children of my friends, Mr. and Mrs. Polk, he being at that time Councillor of the State Department in Mr. Wilson's Administration, and afterwards my friend and colleague in Paris during the Peace negotiations.

A social engagement of singular interest and importance that I fulfilled in Washington soon after my arrival was a dinner of four at the White House, the party consisting of the President, Mrs. Wilson, Colonel House, and myself. From this conversation no subject connected with the war was excluded. We were all absorbed in the problem of successful co-operation, and as this necessarily involved ranging over the immense field of our common interests, a singular unanimity brooded over our friendly discussions. I think the question of the secret treaties was raised by the President after we had left the dinner-table. There were no secrets between us then or afterwards, on any of the many subjects that came up for discussion. The President of the United States was at that moment by far the most important man in the world. Those who occupy so unique a position are socially, perhaps, placed at some disadvantage,

but for my part, whether at his own table or on more formal occasions, whether in Washington, in London, or in Paris, he always seemed to me an interesting talker and quite without pose.

With Colonel House I was already on terms of intimacy and friendship, begun during his visits to London during the earlier years of the war. I had there many opportunities of learning to know and admire his great qualities. History will assign him a unique position. I saw him under the most varying and often the most trying circumstances, and found him always resourceful, and always with unruffled temper. Few, indeed, have been the confidants and constant advisers of rulers who have escaped, as he has deservedly done, any suspicion of self-seeking or desire for personal power in the course of their efforts to further a particular policy.

My work kept me almost entirely in Washington, both on this visit and during my second Mission in 1921–22, so that had it not been for my youthful tour round the world, forty years before, I should never have seen such world-famous sights as San Francisco, Salt Lake City, the beauties of the Yosemite Valley, and the great trees, or Niagara unspoilt.

On the occasion with which I am now concerned, almost the only places which the American authorities found time for me to visit outside Washington were Richmond, Virginia, and New York. We had a wonderful reception in the town of Richmond. Pro-Ally feeling was very strong in Virginia, and my

friends and I were deeply moved at the welcome we received. Part of our welcoming ceremonial was a luncheon where I had the pleasure of giving Lady Astor's father the latest news of his daughter, whom I had left only a few days before superintending her Canadian Hospital at Cliveden.

I am as familiar as most public men, with contact with great crowds deeply moved by great events, but nowhere have I seen, and never had I imagined, anything like the spectacle presented by our landing in New York, and during our long slow drive up the long narrow route. There is no city in the world like New York. It was exactly like going through a canyon whose prodigious walls were pierced with tier above tier of windows, and every window crowded with heads and waving handkerchiefs. It was a most impressive experience. This memorable day concluded with a great banquet given in the Hotel Astoria to the French and British Delegates. I was under the guidance of my old friend Mr. Choate, formerly American Ambassador at Saint James's. I had driven with him to service in the Anglican cathedral. As I parted with him on the steps, we took a tender farewell of one another, for I was returning to Washington that night. As we shook hands, he said, 'We probably shall not meet again till peace is reached.' He was right. He died within a few hours from heart failure.

THE END

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